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Malekula OO12

[For a discussion of the distribution of various traits from Malekula in the New Hebrides and Banks Islands generally, see category 116, pp. 687-744; facing p. 758 (A) - (H).]

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which lie the north of Raaga, constituted for the Small Islanders, before the coming of the white man, the utmost limits of the world. Each had, and still has in their eyes, its special character.

Thus, Ambim is first and foremost the home of the dead of high rank, who, wandering from the Small Islands down the east coast of Malekula, are transported by a ghostly ferryman to the opposite shore, whence they climb on to the volcano and there carry on life after death. This island (among the natives inhabiting whose shores Deacon discovered the 6-section systems of kinship already mentioned) forms part of the predominately patrilineal area to which Malekula and the Small Islands also belong. In this area, though matrilineal descent is given due weight, the overt organisation is patrilineal with patrilocal residence, that is to say that all men remain within their father's village and marry women from other villages. To this patrilineal area belongs also the southern part of Raaga regarding which Père Tattevin has written an important memoir. These islands of Malekula and Ambim, together with the southern part of Raaga, are collectively referred to as the North-Central New Hebrides.

Immediately to the north are the Northern New Hebrides, in all of which overt descent is matrilineal, and in which society is based on what is called a dual organisation consisting of two exogamous matrilineal moieties. This division between an overtly patrilineal area in the south and a matrilineal dual organisation area in the north embraces both branches of the archipelago, the dividing line running due east and west between Malo and Malekula on the one hand and across the middle of Raaga on the other. In the minds of the Small Islanders the dual organisation is particularly connected with the islands to the north-east, namely North Raaga, Oba and Marwa, all of which are also regarded as the home of the creator-deity known in the Northern New Hebrides as Tagaro and in Vao as Taghar. Particularly is this the case with regard to Oba, to which special pilgrimages are made for the sake of initiation into sex, and which white men have called Lepers Island on account of the light, almost Polynesian coloured skin of its inhabitants.

To the north-west lie Malo and the large island of Santo with its very mixed population, who, though also in the dual organisation area, by no means share the reverential attitude accorded to the inhabitants of the north-eastern islands and are visited chiefly on account of the turmeric which they produce and which is used by the Small Islanders as a basic dye for their few articles of clothing. Students of European colonial expansion will remember that the full name of Santo is Terra Australis del Espíritu Santo, so called by Quiros when in 1606 he, the first white man to sight it, landed to found New Jerusalem on a site now entirely lost.

Northward of the New Hebrides lie the two small archipelagos called the Banks and Torres Islands, which are beyond the ken of the

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- (32) Small Islands. These islands also form part of the final expedition area, and were the seat of Codrington's main work. Northward of these, with a gap of some 120 miles, are the Santa Cruz Islands, famous for their feather money, some 200 miles to the westward of which lies San Cristoval, the most southerly of the large Solomon Islands, whence it would be possible to reach the Asiatic continent without once losing sight of land.

Seasons.

- (32) The climate of the New Hebrides is one of the least variable in the world, leading, among other interesting results, to the fact that there is no regular breeding-season for birds, each species having adapted its life-cycle differently to conditions which allow of breeding at almost any time of the year.¹ Being somewhat aside from the main track of cyclones, it is on the whole rather less unhealthy than most parts of Melanesia. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the climate is uniformly moist and rain may fall any day of the year, two main seasons are sufficiently clearly marked off to have an important bearing on the economic and ritual life of the natives. The first coincides with the south-east trade wind that blows from about the middle of May till the end of October, with July as the coolest month, which, under favourable circumstances, somewhat resembles high summer in England. During these months, when there is almost always a cool breeze and sea and sky dazzle in the sunlight, the islands are comparatively free from malaria and the white man is grateful for a blanket at night. These are also for the natives of the Small Islands the months of plenty, during which the main yam crops are dug up and harvested, and during which most of the elaborate ritual activities take place. Towards the end of this season the marine annelid which white men call *puloh* appears during the night at certain phases of the moon. This phenomenon, heralded by the flowering of the *erythrina* tree in July, is eagerly watched for by the natives at certain stages of the moon's cycle during August and September, and its chief appearance on the twentieth night of the October-November moon is also the time when the dead return to visit the living, and marks the beginning of the New Year.²

- (32) This also marks the end of the comparatively cool, dry season. Now the prevailing wind veers round to the north-west, bringing with it a sultry equatorial heat. Clouds cover the sky, though still with intervals of brilliant sunshine, till in December squalls become frequent, continuing throughout January and culminating in February in the nearest approach to cyclones which these islands experience. This is also as a rule the hottest month of the year, and that in which fever and diseases are apt

¹ See the works of Dr. John Baker and Mr. T. H. Harrison.

² The word *puloh* is probably of Samoan origin. Much misconception exists among white men regarding the appearance of this annelid. A detailed description of its various appearances and of its influence on the native calendar will be given in a future volume on Atchia.

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Other cases of the in-dwelling of ancestors in stone will be met with in the course of this work, and it is for this reason, coupled with the natives' absorption in megalithic ritual, that I have chosen the title "Stone Men of Malekula."

DIFFUSION OF MEGALITHIC CULTURE

How this megalithic culture came to be present in Malekula and its neighbouring islands it is outside the scope of this work to enquire. It may on the one hand be the case that this corner of Melanesia represents an isolated backwater left behind from the great stream of megalithic culture that Dr. W. J. Perry and the late Professor Sir Grafton Elliot Smith consider to have originated in the ancient centres of civilisation and to have been borne along maritime routes to the Malay Archipelago and thence across the Pacific to Easter Island and to the American continent where it gave the impetus which led to the rise of the great pre-Columbian cultures. There are of course many pitfalls in handling a subject of such magnitude, and particularly in defining what megalithic culture is. It must be remembered that this phrase covers many aspects of culture other than the mere use of stone monuments, as these writers never cease to point out and as their detractors constantly ignore. The phrase "megalithic culture" is thus used to refer to a very definite culture-complex for which no better name exists, and is convenient simply because the stone monuments are the most durable aspect of it in a world in which material objects not only outlive their creators but are also so much more easy to observe and describe than the ideas which give rise to their creation. Another difficulty arises as to the size of the stone monuments referred to, since there is clearly at first sight a considerable difference between the chambered galleries of the Mediterranean area and the dolmens of Van, between Cleopatra's Needle and small menhirs, or between the stepped ziggurats of Mesopotamia and the stone-platforms of Malekula. A point in common, however, about all these and innumerable similar monuments over a wide area is that, comparatively small as may be those found in outlying places such as Cornwall on the one hand or the New Hebrides on the other, they are in no case the work of individual men but are the result of a communal effort which, not being utilitarian in the material sense, indicates a religious attitude sufficiently deep-rooted to justify the considerable labour entailed in their erection. Since some phrase must be used to describe this widespread phenomenon (and in a work which is purely descriptive of Small Island culture no obligation rests on the author to prosecute comparative studies), the phrase "megalithic" is here used quite non-committally to refer to monuments erected from a religious motive of stones too large to be lifted by hand but need-

ing for their transport some implement such as the sledge illustrated in Plate XVI, 2.

Some indication has already been given of the manifold religious concepts connected with the erection of such monuments on Van, and many more will become apparent during the course of this work. Considering the close similarity not only of the monuments themselves, but also of the ideas connected with them, with similar combinations in the Arue Islands off the coast of New Britain, in Nias, among the Nagas of Assam and in the islands of Indonesia, as well as the Indonesian roots traceable in many of the most important words used in the ritual, there can, I think, be no doubt whatever of the immediate origin of the megalithic culture of Malekula and the surrounding islands from the Malay Archipelago and the neighbouring mainland of South-Eastern Asia. As to the wider movements of this culture mentioned above, I am inclined to agree with the main thesis of Perry and Elliot Smith, with the proviso, to which I know both these agree, that not one but many movements have contributed to its varied manifestations. Thus we have already noted two main types of megalithic culture in Malekula alone, one of which is progressively ousting the other, and this far from exhausts the number of major variations even in this small island. Some indication of the similar complexity of megalithic culture in South-East Asia may be gathered from the detailed work of Heine-Geldern. A further point as regards the intricacy of the problem in Melanesia is the similarity between the organisation into ranks found in the *Mali* and its variants in Malekula with that found in the corresponding institution in the Banks Islands known as the *Sukwe*, in which the fire element is stronger than in Malekula but from which megaliths are entirely absent. On the other hand, dolmens are set up in connexion with other forms of ritual in the Banks Islands, and on one of them, at Gusa in Santa Maria, has been found hidden away in the bush the only completely carved stone statue known in this part of Melanesia,¹ while from the same island Codrington illustrates stonework used in the construction of houses of a kind also unknown in this region.²

DUAL ORGANISATION AND CLASS SYSTEMS OF KINSHIP

So much for the complexity of the problem as regards the details of distribution. In one important respect, however, the study of Small Island culture may throw new light on an aspect of megalithic civilisation that has been the subject of much controversy. This is the dual organisation that Dr. Perry has found to be one of the fundamental characteristics of megalithic culture in its main centres of distribution

¹ See Harrison, 9, Plate facing p. 322.

² Codrington, 3, Frontispiece.

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throughout the world. Various theories, none very satisfactory, have been advanced in explanation of the many forms which this duality has taken, and I submit here that the solution of this problem probably lies in the kinship organisation that is seen to be so intimately connected with the megalithic ritual on Vao, in accordance with which, as already stated, representatives of each matrilineal moiety within the patrilocal village alternately perform the rite. However this may be, I wish to emphasise here that possibly the most valuable contribution of the present work towards our knowledge of the development of human society is the connexion shown to exist between the megalithic culture on this island and what have been called class systems of kinship, namely those primitive systems, till recently believed to exist only in Australia, in which society is segmented owing to the simultaneous operation of matrilineal and patrilineal moieties, of which the matrilineal are the most fundamental. It is unfortunate that, while on Vao, I was not fully alive to the importance of this aspect of the kinship structure, so that I did not give it the attention I now see it deserves. Nevertheless, the fundamental cleavage between the two matrilineal moieties, corresponding to the matrilineal dual organisation in the neighbouring Banks Islands, is a feature so prominent in all Small Island ritual that, while not fully appreciating its meaning, it was impossible not to observe it. Since, then, the whole kinship situation in this part of the New Hebrides has been so clarified by Deacon's discovery of the 6-section system on Ambim that, with the added assistance of Professor Radcliffe-Brown's masterly analysis of the Australian systems, combined with the penetrating study of the organisation of human society made by the late Professor A. M. Hocart, it has been made possible not only to make sense of what at first sight appeared to be the extraordinarily complicated social organisation of Vao, but also to view all our knowledge of class systems from a new angle and to state their fundamental principles in the form of a few very simple laws.

These laws are stated in Chapter V and need not be anticipated now except to point out that the small tribes in which these principles operate most clearly, often containing even fewer members than the 400 individuals all related to one another at present inhabiting Vao, may be regarded from this point of view as more or less self-contained organisms in which the segmentation of social divisions proceeds automatically in obedience to the impersonal forces that underlie human conduct. This does not of course mean that personality is appreciably less highly developed among them than among ourselves. Even with us it is recognised that the most prominent individuals are but the year-heads of forces operating in the community quite independently of persons. So also among primitive peoples individuals exist, but their success and reputation depend on the degree to which they are in touch with innate and impersonal tendencies working themselves out in the

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community to which they belong. Conversely, among such peoples whose lives and social organisation are expressed so largely in terms of kinship, traditional accounts of the foundation of villages in the somewhat dim past will keep alive the memory of just so many men as are necessary to represent the social divisions into which the tribe is divided. In this way the chief village on Vao is said to have been founded by four brothers, because the village itself has four Quarters, this being also the magic number representing completion, and these Quarters in turn result from a four-fold division in the kinship system having as its foundation the two matrilineal moieties already mentioned.

Whether the dual organisation so closely associated with megalithic culture in other parts of the world had its origin in class systems of this nature is a matter that must be left for others to find out. It is enough to point out that a four-fold division not unlike that on which all class systems are founded is also a frequent feature of this culture. If the connexion here suggested is a valid one, it remains, however, to be explained why the chief seat of class systems in the world as it presented itself to the enquiring spirit of the first serious anthropologists operating in the nineteenth century was the continent of Australia, where signs of megalithic influence are so slight as to be said by some to be non-existent.

In attempting to answer this question it must in the first place be pointed out that such systems were not always confined to their existing geographical limits. As Professor Radcliffe-Brown has pointed out, signs of their former existence occur in many parts of the Australian-Dravidian area, reaching as far westward as South India¹ where signs of a previous megalithic civilisation are also prominent. Indications of similar systems existing in the very recent past if not still today are found in South Abyssinia in a region where there are great numbers of megalithic monuments very similar to those erected in Malekula.² Among more civilised people capable of leaving behind written records, class systems, as shown later in this work, also existed some 3000 years ago in China.³ There is, moreover, a good deal of information leading to the supposition that the four main castes giving rise to the existing caste system of India arose out of a 4-section class system not differing in essentials from the 4-section systems of Australia.⁴ These are but a few examples of the mass of information now being accumulated regarding the former existence of class systems over a wide area which coincides very closely with that of megalithic distribution.

With regard to the question of Australia we may, so far as I understand the problem, suppose either that the 4-section system based on

¹ Radcliffe-Brown, *l.*, p. 344.

² Jensen, pp. 315 ff. (for kinship); pp. 448 ff. (for megaliths).

³ See p. 151.

⁴ See G. H. Held, *The Mahābhārata*, Amsterdam, 1935.

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matrilineal moieties is so fundamental to a certain stage of human development that it became attached to the earlier forms of megalithic culture but has since disappeared from most parts of the world owing to various causes; or else that certain aspects of what is called megalithic culture penetrated Australia as the practice of sub-incision is said to have done, but that the erecting of stone monuments was not one of those retained, owing to the nomadic habits of most Australian tribes. 171

This question I leave unanswered, and will end this introduction with a warning regarding the use of the word "primitive" when applied to human institutions. If we may regard the building up of civilisation as in a manner comparable to the building of a house, we must realise that, however wide the prospect from the top story, this still depends on the foundations, deeply as these may be buried. This type of simile is of course a familiar one when speaking of the personal unconscious of individual people. There is, however, also a racial unconscious which expresses itself in the pattern of culture it produces and in the mythology which partly reflects and partly compensates for this pattern. So that things often regarded as primitive in the sense in which this word is frequently used, as meaning stages that have been passed through and therefore no longer play any rôle in existing social conditions, may on the contrary prove still to be a basic part of our heritage which in view of later developments we are apt to ignore, but on which those later achievements are in fact built. This may be seen, as Professor Hocart has shown, in some of our most time-honoured institutions as well as in the constantly recurring groupings of social and political life which, while ever changing on the surface, for ever reproduce old patterns in accordance with the fundamental tendencies of the collective mind. The simple point I wish to make here, therefore, is that the word "primitive" on the rare occasions when it is used in this work does not carry with it the connotation of "inferior" or even of "backward," but rather indicates a condition in which some of the basic factors governing human life are more clearly seen, because less overlaid, than in the so-called "higher" civilisations which have been built up on these earlier foundations.

B

361 with the presentation of tusked boars. Here, men rule supreme, and here
 535 the main sacrifices to the ancestors take place. This is the spot from which
 562 each village is said to spring, and in all native accounts of the foundation of
 any village the construction of the dancing-ground is the founder's first act.

Ghamal.

346 Close to the dancing-ground is the largest building in the village,
 called *ghamal*.¹ This is the roofed counterpart of the dancing-ground,
 being the centre for all such business connected with the Maki as needs
 [56] protection from the weather. This also is sacred to men, no woman
 [17] being allowed, save on certain specified occasions, to set foot across the
 fence surrounding it. The word *ghamal* is clearly connected with the
 Banks Islands *gamal*, and the intimate association of this structure with
 the dancing-ground is seen in the use of the word itself, since in Atchin
 the corresponding word *amal* is actually used for the dancing-ground,
 while the Initiation Lodge, which in Atchin occupies the same position
 with regard to the dancing-ground as does the *ghamal* on Vao, is called
lol-hamal, meaning "in the midst of the (h)*amal*." Variations of this same
 word are applied throughout Malekula and Ambrim alternatively for
 the dancing-ground or for the structure connected with it.² It is probably
 the same word as *Mal*, the title taken by the chief sacrificer in the Maki
 rites throughout this area. This title is connected with the verb *pal*, "to

¹ Usually combined with the indefinite article as *na-ghamal*.

² Instances of the use of this term for Men's-House or LODGE are:

Banks Islands, *gamal* (Codrington, Rivers).

Torres Islands, *gamal* (Rivers, 1, vol. I, p. 185).

Oba, *gamali* (Rivers, 1, vol. II, p. 332).

Santo (St. Philip's and St. James' Bay), *gamali* (ibid.).

" (Nogugu), *na-gamal*, *na-gamali* (Deacon, 3, p. 473).

" " and Epi, *hamal*, *hamali*, *hamel* (Rivers, 1, vol. II, p. 333).

South Raga (Ponowol), *mal* (Tatelin, 1, 1927, p. 427).

Ambrim (Sulol), *himel* (Rivers, 3), *imel* (Deacon, 3, p. 312).

Malekula (Seniang), *na-amel* (Deacon, 4, glossary).

" (Lambumbu), *(g)amal* (ibid.).

" (Lagilag), *hamal* (ibid.).

" (Big Nambas), *ghamal* (ibid.).

" (Port Sandwich), *amil* (Rivers, 1, vol. II, p. 333).

" (Aulus), *n'amel*, *n'amel* (ibid.).

West Epi (Burumba), *gamali* (Deacon, 3, p. 304).

Instances of the use of the term for DANCING-GROUND all come from Malekula and Ambrim, and are:

Malekula (Atchin), *amal* (where *lol-hamal* means "Initiation Lodge") (Layard, 9).

" (Wala), *n'amil* (ibid.).

" (Lambumbu), *na-amel* (Deacon, 4, glossary).

" (Lagilag), *hamil* (= "sacred place of clan") (ibid.).

Ambrim (Sulol), *hamel* (where *himel* means Men's-House) (Rivers, 3).

In the Small Islands of Malekula, other than Vao, this meaning has become extended yet further, in that many VILLAGES themselves are called *amil*, with a qualifying adjective, e.g. on Atchin, *Emil Paras* (long), *Emil Maru* (narrow), *Emil Lap* (great).

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ments. All these, it will be noticed, have been strictly from the patrilineal point of view, in accordance with the natives' present preoccupation with patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence. 611

There is, however, another side to the question, namely the principle of matrilineal descent, which is less obvious on the surface but nevertheless forms the foundation of the whole social system.

MATRILINEAL MOIETIES AND MARRIAGE SECTIONS

We have already seen how Vab is the most northerly outpost of the patrilineal area, which includes the whole of the South and Central New Hebrides, and that in the islands immediately to the north and north-east there is a dual organisation consisting of two exogamous matrilineal moieties with descent reckoned in the female line. These two matrilineal moieties are found also throughout the Small Islands in the social divisions referred to by the natives in pidgin-English as "lines," the word "line" being applied to that section of each matrilineal moiety that is found in any one patrilocal village. In this way each village contains two "lines," each such "line" consisting of those members of the village who belong to one of the two matrilineal moieties that extend throughout this wide area despite the overt patrilocal organisation. Thus, in the great Maki rite each "line" alternately acts as introducer to the other.¹ In Atchin the wooden images set up by the members of each "line" are for this reason called *n'ei weaweng*, of which the first word, *n'ei*, means "wood" and hence "wooden image," and the second word, *weaweng*, is equivalent to the Oba expression *wai ung* meaning "matrilineal moiety," of which the literal rendering is "'bunches of fruit' . . . as if all the members hang on the same branch."² 611 616 617

Similar "lines" are found in Raga and Ambrim, where in each case their existence is due, as in the Small Islands, to the influence of the matrilineal moieties on the overt patrilineal social organisation. [171]

It will be noted, therefore, that in all the areas just mentioned descent is both patrilineal in respect of the overt patrilineal organisation, and matrilineal in respect of the exogamous matrilineal moieties. This fact led Rivers, in his attempt to understand the kinship system of North Raga, to put forward the suggestion that there might possibly exist in these islands what are called "class systems" of kinship similar in essentials to those found in most parts of Australia.³

Rivers did not, however, succeed in working out the details of any such system, and it was left to the genius and determination of Deacon actually to demonstrate the existence of a class system in Ambrim.⁴ This 617

¹ See p. 294.

² Rivers, 1, vol. II, pp. 66, 75.

³ Codrington, 3, p. 26.

⁴ Deacon, 2.

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EGO's SSS (A¹X) returns to EGO's own matrilineal trisection, thus ranking as a "younger brother," but to a different "line" in EGO's patrilineal moiety.

EGO's SSSS (A¹Z) belongs to the same matrilineal trisection as EGO's son, but to the opposite "line."

EGO's SSSSS (A¹Y) belongs to the same matrilineal trisection as EGO's SS, but to the opposite "line."

Finally, EGO's SSSSSS (A¹X) "comes back" in the sixth generation, into the same matrilineal trisection and into the same "line," i.e. the same matrilineal moiety, as EGO.

All these individuals belong to the same patrilineal moiety. Ascending generations in the same moiety may be traced in reverse order. Thus:

FFFFFF	=	EGO	(A ¹ X)
FFFFF	=	S	(A ¹ Z)
FFFF	=	SS	(A ¹ Y)
FFF	=	SSS	(A ¹ X)
FF	=	SSSS	(A ¹ Z)
F	=	SSSSS	(A ¹ Y)
EGO	=	SSSSSS	(A ¹ X)

The ancestry or descent of any man in the opposite patrilineal moiety, for example that of EGO's mother's brother (B¹X), may be similarly traced by following the broken line, till they coincide again in the sixth ascending and descending generation, thus:

MFFFFFF	=	MB	(B ¹ X)
MFFFFF	=	MBS	(B ¹ Y)
MFFFF	=	MBSS	(B ¹ Z)
MFFF	=	MBSSS	(B ¹ X)
MFF	=	MBSSSS	(B ¹ Y)
MF	=	MBSSSSS	(B ¹ Z)
MB	=	MBSSSSSS	(B ¹ X)

This is, of course, a theoretical presentation of the case. The natives themselves do not possess kinship terms beyond the third ascending and descending generation, as we have seen from the existence of the term *avik* (see p. 132).

EVIDENCE FOR THE FORMER EXISTENCE OF MATRILINEAL 12-SECTION SYSTEMS IN OTHER PARTS OF MELANESIA

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It is, however, not without interest to consider what evidence there is for the former existence of 12-section systems in the overtly matrilineal islands further north. In the first place, Deacon points out at considerable length that the most ancient form of social organisation in this part of Melanesia was the division into "two moieties with six marriage sections and matrilineal descent."¹ It needs no great amount

¹ Deacon, 4, p. 701.

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617 of consideration, however, to realise that no sectional system can exist
171 with matrilineal descent only. Even in overtly matrilineal areas some patrilineal descent must exist, and the minimum of such descent necessary to bind any system together is that of patrilineal moieties. This is, as we have seen, precisely what is indicated in the kinship system outlined above, and it is thus clear that for the words "six marriage sections with matrilineal descent" should be substituted "six matrilineal descent groups" such as exist in this formulation, with patrilineal moieties binding these six groups into a 12-section system.

Evidence for the former existence of such systems is at hand from many parts of Melanesia. Thus, from the Solomon Islands, Rivers reports six matrilineal clans in Guadalcanar,¹ and Codrington recorded six in the neighbouring island of Florida,² though later Rivers could find only four.³ Codrington also records the foundation of twelve villages in the district of Florida by a man fleeing from the island of Ysabel immediately to the north, and of twelve shrines in the same district.⁴ Rivers further reports that in the district of Kia at the north-western end of Ysabel there are three main matrilineal groups, each of which is yet further divided, one into six, one into nine, and yet another into twelve.⁵

Coming nearer to Vao, Rivers states that the two matrilineal moieties in Mota are further sub-divided respectively into six and seven sub-divisions (the seventh is probably extraneous), thus making almost certainly an original total of twelve sections,⁶ and probably accounting for the twelve brothers of Banks Islands mythology, of whom the best-known is Kwat.⁷

Evidence of the formation of three matrilineal descent groups by the division of one of two moieties into two, and that such groups are capable of yet further sub-division, is forthcoming from the neighbouring Torres Islands, where the place of the matrilineal moieties found in the Banks Islands is taken by three matrilineal descent groups called Tefmar, Gameljat and Gameltemata, suggesting, as Rivers observes, that the Gameltemata "may have split off from the Gameljat, and thus produced a threefold division."⁸ Furthermore, while Tefmar and Gameljat each have four sub-divisions, Gameltemata has only two, so that Gameljat and Gameltemata, having together six sub-divisions, stand to one another in precisely the same relation as that in which the Vao village of Pete-hul with four Quarters stands to Togh-vanu with two.

These examples are but a few out of many, and indicate the former existence of sectional systems based on matrilineal moieties and tri-sections in many parts of Melanesia. Most of these systems have now

¹ Rivers, 1, vol. 1, p. 243.

² Rivers, 1, vol. 1, p. 241.

³ Rivers, 1, vol. 1, pp. 245-6.

⁴ See p. 209.

⁵ Codrington, 3, p. 30.

⁶ Codrington, 3, pp. 94-5 (note).

⁷ Rivers, 1, vol. 1, pp. 23, 98.

⁸ Rivers, 1, vol. 1, p. 177.

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broken down owing to later influences, such as the custom of marriage with the mother's brother's widow. As reference to any kinship diagram in this and the foregoing chapter will show, this relative belongs to the same patrilineal moiety as EGO. This form of marriage thus automatically destroys any class system, but nevertheless leaves the matrilineal descent groups intact. Thus, for example, in the Banks Islands, where this form of marriage takes place, the matrilineal clans have survived but the sections have disappeared.

We have seen how, in South-West Ambrim, a different influence is at work, namely the ever-increasing emphasis on the importance of patrilineal descent. In South and West Malekula both influences seem to have combined to bring about the complete collapse of all sectional systems. Nevertheless elements of the former terminology persist, as seen in the fact that in the districts of Mewun and Lambumbu, for example, the FFF is still called "elder brother" despite the custom of marriage with the MBW and the apparent complete disruption of matrilineal clans.¹

MATRILINEAL 12-SECTION SYSTEM DURING THE CHOU PERIOD
IN CHINA

Lest it be thought that the 12-section system from which it is suggested that these clan systems have been derived represents only a theoretical scheme that in practice would be too unwieldy to work, it is interesting to note in passing that there is evidence of a similar 12-section system having flourished in the Chou period of China, between about 1000 and 300 B.C.

This evidence is derived from the *Erh Ya*, a glossary dating from about the third century B.C., with additions in the second century B.C. and perhaps later, which contains a chapter in explanation of kinship terms used in writing from an earlier age. This chapter has been translated by Mr. Arthur Waley, who kindly called my attention to it and sent me a copy. There is no space here to analyse the whole system from the large number of kinship terms given. I will therefore confine myself to calling attention to two groups of facts only, namely:

(a) The 4-section element on which the whole system is built up as seen in the terms applied to close relatives in Fig. 36. Some of these terms are very expressive, such as those used by a woman for her DHF, whom she calls *yii*, meaning "draw near," and for her BSCh, whom she calls "returned (*kuri*) grandchildren," both these terms clearly

¹ Deacon, 4, pp. 92, 99. In Seniang, on the other hand (p. 77), it is the FFFF who is called "elder brother," which would be the logical result of a hitherto unrecorded type of 8-section system formed of two patrilineal and four matrilineal descent groups which, if it ever existed, has now collapsed for the same reasons.

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617 referring to the fact that these relatives belong (i.e. "draw near" or "return") to her own kinship section.

171 (b) A long list of descriptive terms applied to relatives in the direct male line up to the fourth ascending generation (FFFF) and down to the eighth descending generation (SSSSSSS), in which the FFF and SSS are called respectively *tsing tsao*, meaning "double grandfather," and *tsing sun*, meaning "double grandson," and male members of the sixth

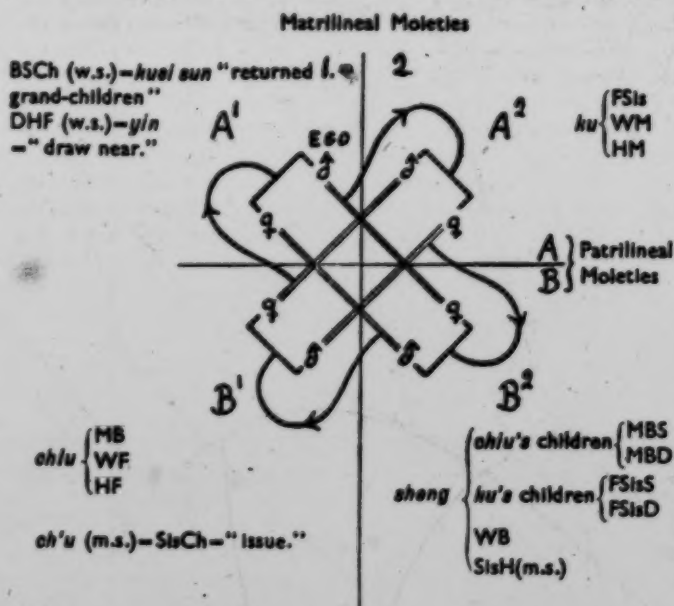


FIG. 36

descending generation (SSSSSS) are called *k'un sun*, meaning "elder brother grandson." Why this relative should be called "elder" instead of "younger" I do not know, unless this be a term of respect. Examination of Fig. 35, however, will show how these three terms describe exactly the position of these relatives in a 12-section system with six matrilineal descent groups. Thus the FFF and SSS both "double" EGO by returning to his own matrilineal trisection. These relatives are not, however, fully equivalent to him, owing to their membership of the opposite matrilineal moiety. Full equivalence with EGO is not reached till the sixth descending generation, and it is clearly for this reason that in this Chinese system it is the SSSSSS who is called "brother." Any

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doubt as to the essential correctness of this interpretation is, I think, dispelled by the name given to the seventh descending generation (SSSSSS), who is called *yéng sun*, which Mr. Waley translates as "repeat grandson." This phrase agrees so precisely with the fact that, as we have seen, a 12-section system repeats itself after each sixth generation that, since Mr. Waley had made his translation without any knowledge of the facts now being presented, I wrote telling him of my interpretation and asking for more information. He replied, "The word *yéng* does indeed mean 'the same thing over again,' 'as you were' and the like. It is used on the Analects of Confucius when they are discussing whether to rebuild the State treasury on a new plan, or to 'keep it as it was before.' It is defined as 'same as at the start.'"¹

3

FORMULATION OF THE EXISTING PATRILOCAL ORGANISATION ON VAO

TRANSITION TO OVERT PATRILINEAL DESCENT

I have mentioned this ancient Chinese system not only as providing a parallel with the system deduced from the kinship terminology on Vao, but for a second reason also, namely as evidence for the transition from matrilineal to patrilineal descent. For at the present day but little remains of the matrilineal element in China, where descent is now reckoned almost exclusively on a patrilineal basis, though a relic of the matrilineal moieties is still found in the practice of recording the names of ancestors in the direct male line on tablets arranged in two columns, each column containing the names of alternating generations corresponding to the "lines" composed of alternate generations in the male line of descent caused by the matrilineal moieties on Vao.

The same process has been at work in North Ambrim, which, as Deacon points out, is in a "transition stage to patrilineal descent."² Just how this transformation from matrilineal to patrilineal trisections has taken place is not explained. Nor am I able to explain through direct evidence the similar process that appears to have taken place on

¹ The above brief reference represents only one aspect of this ancient system, of which some of the kinship terms show signs also of a division into 8 sections, from which the 12 sections have probably been derived owing to the usual bisection of inferior moieties. An analysis of these terms was made by the author some years ago but has not been published, and it was therefore with interest that his attention was called, after the above passage was already in print, to a work recently published by Marcel Granet entitled *Catégories Matrimoniales et Relations de Proximité dans la Chine Ancienne* (Annales Sociologiques, Series B, Paris, 1939), in which he also demonstrates the 8-section basis of this system while pointing out certain differences between it and the 8-section systems of Australia.

² Deacon, 4. p. 701.

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Godefroy's version of sham fight includes dedication as warrior.

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Godefroy, writing nearly twenty years later, briefly mentions this ritual battle, which he calls *sagalian*. His version differs in several respects from mine, and is therefore worth quoting. He says: "As soon as the news of the birth of a son is spread, all the men of middle age, youths and grown boys meet the next morning on the dancing-ground, and a 'small war' begins. The small boys provide the missiles, banyan fruits, nuts of various kinds, green citrons, little oranges, yellow lemons, etc. . . . such as are to be found in groves planted by the side of each ground. A family combat is then held between those in the fifties and the younger members of the clan, during which each hit is greeted with cheers. This play lasts the whole morning, and when the battle is over the clan counts another warrior . . . , a warrior of tender years, it is true, but one who, like the little fish, will grow also if his relatives vigilantly combat the sorcery that will be levelled at him with stronger spells.

" . . . It is easy to understand, from this, how much the birth of a male child is prized; joy radiates from every face, hope is reborn among the elders in seeing their lineage increased with yet another warrior; despite all, the clan will remain strong and able to defend itself against all comers." ¹

Comparative survey showing transformation of the rite from one having to do with kinship to one having to do with war.

While there is no doubt about the atmosphere of rejoicing that accompanies the mock battle, there are several signs that in other respects the rite has changed character considerably during the past twenty years. In the first place, the mock battle itself appears to have lost much, if not all, of its character as a contest between villages (i.e. groups of persons standing in a definite kinship relation one to the other). In the second place, it now seems to take place at the birth of any son, not only the eldest. In the third place, there is the very definite indication that the present object of the rite is to create a new "warrior."

A survey of comparative evidence from neighbouring cultures does, in fact, show that the rite is in process of completely changing its character from one which in the first place was concerned solely with problems of kinship to one in which the uppermost idea is that of introducing the boy into the ritual life of men by allowing him to make his first public sacrifice and at the same time instructing him in the art of war.

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As with so many of the rites in this borderland between areas of predominately matrilineal and of predominately patrilineal descent, the geographical distribution of cognate rites taken from north to south at the same time represents the course of its development from its original to its later form.

¹ Godefroy, 1, 1933, p. 40.

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(a) Banks Islands (general).

Let us first take Codrington's account of the corresponding rite held in connexion with the birth of an eldest son in the Banks Islands. He says: "There is raised upon that event, a noisy playful fight, *vagalo*, after which the father buys off the assailants with payment of money to the other ~~sex~~ [matrilineal moiety], to kinsmen, that is, of the child and his mother." It will be noted that the word *vagalo* is the same, allowing for dialectical variation, as the Vao word *va-vaghal-een*, and his comment on the meaning of the rite is that "it is hardly possible to be mistaken in taking this fight to be a ceremonial, if playful, assertion of the claim of the mother's kinsfolk to the child as one of themselves, and the father's payment to be the quieting of their claim and the securing of his own position as head of his own family."¹

(b) Motlav.

In the account given above, Codrington does not refer specifically to any particular district in the Banks Islands. Rivers, on the other hand, differentiates between the practice followed in the island of Motlav and that followed in Mota, slightly further south. In Motlav, the child remains in the house, and it is conspicuously the father only who stands at the door and is pelted by the mother's brothers with fruit, after which he pays them with shell money.² This proves beyond question the correctness of Codrington's interpretation.

(c) Mota.

It has been seen that there is in Motlav no question of the child itself being put through any kind of initiatory rite, whether as an introduction to warfare or anything else, the issue being one solely between the mother's brothers and the father. In Mota, however, a new element is introduced. The rite here is called *kalo vagalo*. "A little bow is put into the hands of the child and a woman stands with the child in her arms at the door of the house. All the . . . maternal uncles of the child collect outside and shoot at the woman and child with blunted arrows or throw lemons at them. The woman moves the child about so as to diminish the chance of its being struck, and after a time the father puts an end to the business by paying money to the uncles."³

(d) Atchin.

So much for the rite as held in the predominately matrilineal area north of Vao. If we now turn to the predominately patrilineal Small Islands immediately to the south, we find, in Atchin, a rite called *wa-wahalen*, again corresponding with the Vao *va-vaghal-een* and held, as in

¹ Codrington, 3, p. 231.² Rivers, 1, vol. I, p. 146.³ Rivers, 1, vol. I, p. 149.

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171 all the above cases, only at the birth of an eldest son, in which considerable changes have occurred. For here, though the element of the sham fight persists, the chief emphasis is laid on the boy's dedication as a warrior. For this reason the rite is put off till he is himself capable of carrying a bow and arrow, that is to say, as nearly as I could compute, till he is about ten years old. The father's house is indeed raided, but this time by the women, who throw water over his bed and for some reason also over one another's. A very modified form of sham fight is carried out at sea between boys and girls ranged on opposing sides, and includes a kind of introduction to seafaring, the eldest son in whose honour the rite is held being placed in a canoe; but the original meaning of the rite is maintained in the fact that he is himself the only member of the conflicting parties who takes no part in the fight. The mother's brothers are indeed paid, but only with mats (poor payment, since here mats are so much more inferior as currency to pigs), and the position to which even they have sunk is shown in the fact that they too are at one moment soused by the women with water while, by a curious reversal of rôles owing to the transformation of the sham fight into a sex battle, they are now themselves actually protected by the fathers. The most complete break-away from the original meaning of the rite occurs, however, when the eldest son, forsaking his passive rôle, for the first time in his life sacrifices a boar in the dancing-ground, and hands it over to his own mother's brother to eat.¹

(e) *Wala*.

In the Small Island of Wala, the next further south, somewhat similar rites are carried out, but this time it is the boy's mother herself who is pelted with missiles while bathing, and the rite is no longer called by any term comparable to the Vao *va-vaghal-een* but is on the contrary called *melarum*, the name of the dance-cycle performed during the rites, and is itself regarded as a kind of preliminary step giving the right to participate in the Maki.²

(f) *Matanavat*.

A sham fight on the lines described for Vao has been reported as forming part of the rites gone through at the birth of a "chief's" eldest son at Matanavat on the north coast of Malekula.³

(g) *South Raga; S.W. and N.W. Malekula*.

Further south, in South Raga, where overt patrilineal descent is balanced by a very strong matrilineal element, special payments are made to the mother's brothers at the birth of an eldest son, but no sham fight

¹ For a full account of this rite in its proper setting see future volume on Atchin.

² For a full account see future volume.

³ Harrison, 2, p. 42.

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has been recorded; ¹ nor is there any record of a sham fight in the detailed accounts given by Deacon of birth rites in the still more predominately patrilineal districts of South-West and North-West Malekula.²

(h) *Conclusion regarding Vao.*

There is thus little doubt that the institution of the sham fight over the first-born on Vao, however elaborate it may have become, and in spite of its present use as a dedication rite, had its origin not in the desire to create a warrior, but in the rising power of patrilineal descent still ritually resented by the representatives of the old matriarchal system whom the father still has to indemnify with gifts. Like all rites in the Small Islands, however, it has been transformed by the natives' genius for the creation of dramatic situations into an occasion for fun and display.

ADOPTION

The practice of adoption is very widespread in the New Hebrides and Banks Islands, where in some districts it is carried out in such an extreme form that parents are often powerless to prevent their own new-born child from being adopted at birth even against their own will. No adequate explanation for this to us extraordinary custom has so far been put forward. Rivers ingeniously supposes a previous state of sexual communism among the matrilineal peoples of this area leading to community of children, coupled with the later immigration of a patrilineal people arriving by sea without womenkind and therefore having to assert their right to their own children by wholesale adoption.³ This theory contains a number of assumptions for which no evidence exists. There is no evidence for the existence of sexual communism nor yet for any lack of women among the patrilineal immigrants, and still less for the lack of "natural" ties between parents and children which he admits that such a theory implies. There is, however, a certain "community" of children in the sense expressed among all primitive peoples by the classificatory system of kinship, namely that the strength of the immediate family tie is modified in a way that does not happen with us by the strong bonds existing between members of the same clan. These bonds vary in strength inversely in proportion to the size of the clan, and in small communities such as those of the New Hebrides are very strong indeed. In this respect Rivers is right in assuming a certain "community" of children. He is right also with regard to the comparatively recent introduction of patrilineal influence. There is no need, however, to seek further and largely hypothetical explanations, for what he does not perceive is that the whole practice of adoption in the extreme form in which it occurs in these islands

¹ Tattevin, 1, 1926, p. 400.² Rivers, 1, vol. II, pp. 136-40, 400-3.³ Deacon, 4, Chapter IX.

CHAPTER IX

MYTHOLOGY

MYTHOLOGICAL BEINGS

(A) TA-GHAR

Founder of ideal village organisation, equivalent to Tagaro and Tangaroa.

WE have already met with the creator-deity Ta-ghar who caused the falling of the *memel* fruit which, splitting on the root of the *tapol* tree, gave rise to the creation of the first man and woman and to the alleged "perfect" organisation of Pete-hul. 776

The Atchin form of the name is Ta-har, used in the designation of such striking natural formations as the Malekulan promontory called Tsüngon Ta-har, "Ta-har's lip," jutting out into the sea between Atchin and Vao.

This deity is clearly identical with the beneficent sky creator-god Tagaro, who is the supreme deity in Maewo, Oba and North Raga, and whose home is said to have been on Maewo.¹ These names correspond closely with those of the Polynesian god known variously as Tangaroa (in New Zealand), Tangaloa (in Samoa and Tonga), Tanaoa (in the Marquesas), Ta'aroa (in Tahiti) and Kanaloa (in Hawaii), and although his attributes differ considerably in each of these groups it will be seen later that the beliefs regarding him in the Small Islands combine most of the elements thus found scattered throughout these Polynesian islands.²

Other forms of the name.

In Hog Harbour, on the west coast of Santo, we find a curtailed form of the same word in the name used for the sky-deity Yetar, and in that of the mountain called Takar, where the dead of that region are said to go.³ In neighbouring regions, where the sky-god goes by other names, the same name is used in various ways for less noble beings. Thus, in Malo, where there is a conflict of cults represented by a belief in two separate sky-worlds, the supreme deity in one is Tokotaitai, but the other is said to be the dwelling-place of Takaru, who is here regarded as having the status 776
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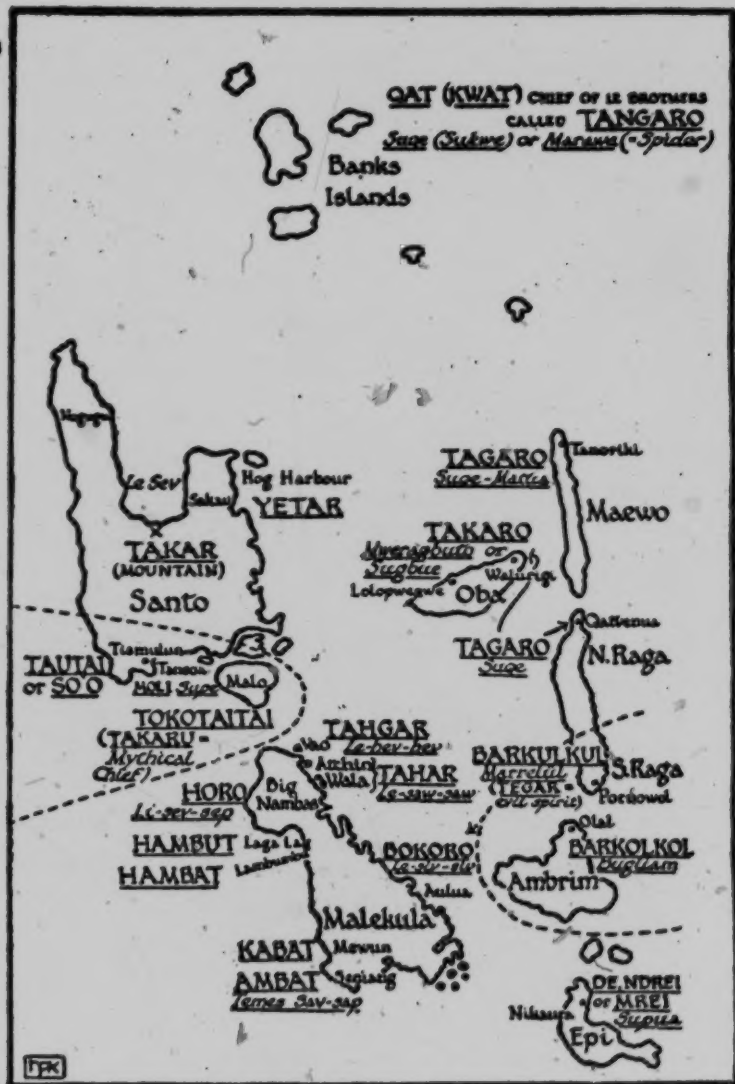
¹ See Codrington, 3, p. 168. Harrison tells of another home of Tagaro on Mount Lombenbenon, Oba (2, p. 395). The Small Islanders, however, regard Maewo as his home.

² For general summary and discussion of these Polynesian attributes see Williamson, pp. 238-43.

³ Deacon, 3, pp. 463-5.

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MAP VI

Sketch-map of the Northern New Hebrides and Banks Islands, showing distribution of deities of the Tagaro-Kwat-Ambat cycle (in capitals underlined), and the associated Guardians of the Dead (in italics underlined). - (N.B. - For TAHGAR read TAGHAR.)

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of "big chief."¹ A little further west, at Tismulun on the south coast of Santo, he disappears altogether, and the deity is called variously Tautai or So'o.² At the other extremity of this area, in South Raga, we meet with yet another deity, Barkukul, but the name of Tagaro still survives in the form of *tegar*, used to designate an evil spirit.³ The Barkukul area spreads to North Ambrim (Olal), where the name of the deity is Barkolkol.⁴ In the Aulua district on the east coast of Malekula his name is Bokoro.⁵

LIST OF REFERENCES TO MAP VI

Banks Islands.	Codrington, 3, pp. 154 ff.
Maewo.	" " p. 168.
Oba: Waurigi.	" " p. 171.
Lolopwepwe.	Suas, 1912 (and Codrington, 3, p. 170).
Raga: Qatvenua.	Codrington, 3, p. 169.
Pornowol.	Tattevin, 1, 1926, pp. 329, 389 ff.
Ambrim.	Suas, 1911, pp. 906 ff.
Epi.	Capell, 1, p. 65.
Santo: Hog Harbour.	Deacon, 3, pp. 463-4.
Tismulun.	" " p. 488.
Tangoa.	Capell, 1, p. 54. <i>Moti tanumu</i> and <i>subtanumu</i> are terms applied to "chiefs higher and lower of the spirits."
Malo.	Paterson, p. 27.
Malekula: Vao	Layard, p. 203.
Atchin	
Wala	Harrison, 1, p. 113.
Big Nambas.	
Lambumbu.	Deacon, 4, p. 637.
Lagalag.	" " p. 638.
Mewun.	" " pp. 628 ff.
Seniang.	" " pp. 554 ff., 617 ff.
Aulua.	Leggatt, pp. 701, 707.

The Big Nambas Horo.

Among the Big Nambas, the deity is called Horo.⁶ This name raises an interesting point, since it appears to be equivalent either to that of the Society Islands god Oro, or else to the Atchin Ta-har, but without the syllable *ta-*. While fully aware of the numerous suggestions that have been put forward by various authors regarding the provenance of the

¹ Paterson, p. 27. I am indebted for this reference to the Rev. A. Capell (see also Capell, 1). Another account, possibly from a different part of Malo, speaks of Taharo being regarded in this island as a deity to whom prayers and offerings are secretly made, and sacrifices performed on a stone hidden in the devotee's house (Donau, quoted by Speiser, 3, p. 362).

² Deacon, 3, p. 488.

³ Tattevin, 1, 1926, pp. 389 ff. Though usually evil, these spirits are, however, sometimes good. Tattevin quotes the expression *tegar la tu*, "let the spirit be favourable," adding that some are regarded as tutelary spirits (ibid. p. 392).

⁴ Suas, 1911, pp. 906 ff.

⁵ Leggatt, pp. 701, 707.

⁶ Harrison, 1, p. 113.

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names and of the beliefs associated with Tangaroa in Polynesia, ranging from Micronesia to South China, it may be worth pointing out that in many parts of the Northern New Hebrides, *ta-* is a personal prefix meaning "man of." Thus, in the language of Atchin, with which I am most familiar, *ta-Ba* means "man of Oba," and *ta-Mba* "man of Ambrim," or, as the natives put it when speaking pidgin-English, "man Oba" and "man Ambrim."¹ In the same way, the familiar Melanesian word for "ghost," which in Vao is *ta-mat* and in Atchin *ta-mats*, is simply the word *mat* or *mats* meaning "dead" prefixed by the same personal particle *ta-*. So also, in Malo, where *numu* means "shadow" or "reflexion," *ta-numu* means "soul."² It is of course true that the personal prefix *ta-* does not occur in Polynesia, but if, as is held by more than one authority, including Dr. Haddon, the belief in Tangaroa went to Polynesia via Melanesia, it is nevertheless possible that the original name of the god may have been akin to the existing Big Nambas form *Horo*, and that the prefix *ta-* became attached to it in Melanesia but was unrecognised as such in Polynesia, whither the word Tangaroa proceeded as a single word. In the Banks Islands, where Kwat takes the place of Tagaro, we find a form closely allied to Big Nambas *Horo* in the name of Kwat's mother, Kwatgoro.³

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Myths connected with this deity mirror social organisation.

Without wishing to stress this suggestion unduly, let us return to an examination of the problems connected with the belief in this deity in the area dealt with in this book. We have already seen how, in Vao, Ta-ghar created the first man and woman, and is held responsible for the "perfect" organisation of Pete-hul into four Quarters, and how this myth is paralleled by the creation by Takaro of four groups in the village of Logueguea on Oba.⁴ It is thus clear that the legends concerning him are closely bound up with the existing organisation of society in areas in which they are told. The more usual number associated with this deity is ten, seen in the ten brothers he is said to have in North Raga,⁵ and the ten sons which he is said to have had on Oba.⁶ On Atchin, the corresponding deity Ta-har is closely associated with ten brothers who correspond with the division of each village, for ritual purposes, into ten families, and there can be little doubt the number ten associated with Tagaro in North Raga and Oba has a similar connexion with the organisation of society there too.

¹ Thus also, with the vowel-change invariably occurring in the Small Islands before certain combinations of letters, *ta-Vao* means "man of Vao," *ta-Tsan* (in the Vao language *to-San*) "man of Atchin," *ta-Wala* "man of Wala," *ta-Rano* "man of Rano," *ti-Era* "man of Raga," etc.

² Ivens, 4, p. 45.

³ See p. 163.

⁴ Ibid. p. 171. According to Suas, 1912, pp. 45-7, he makes ten men of clay. One of these he transforms into a woman by knocking off his genitals; this woman becomes the mother of two sons, representing the two matrilineal moieties.

⁵ Codrington, 3, p. 156.

⁶ Codrington, 3, p. 169.

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Kwat the "chief Tangaro."

In the Banks Islands the place of Tagaro is taken by Kwat, said to have been the oldest of twelve brothers, probably indicating the presence at some former date of a twelve-section system of kinship in these islands.¹ Of these twelve brothers, all but himself are called Tangaro.² This is again the same word as Tagaro and Tangaroa,³ and it would thus appear that the title Kwat probably means what the word *kwat* does in ordinary Mota speech, namely "head," here used in the sense of "chief." The title Kwat would in this case mean "the chief Tangaro."⁴

Kabat and Ambat.

Returning to the west coast of Malekula, Deacon further showed the equivalence of Kwat, both philologically and with regard to their respective attributes, with the Kabat of Mewun and the corresponding Ambat of Seniang,⁵ whose names, as Dr. Ivens has pointed out, should properly be written Ka-Bat and A-Mbat.⁶ To these may be added the Ha-Mbat of Lambumbu and the Ha-Mbut of Lagalag. It would therefore appear certain that the creator-deities bearing both types of name, Ta-garo (Ta-ngaroa) and Kwat (Ka-Bat, A-Mbat), found over an area stretching from the Banks Islands to South-West Malekula, represent two phases of a single culture complex.⁷

All the evidence points to the fact that this deity is a late-comer both in the Northern New Hebrides and in the Banks Islands. In all these islands the belief in him is accompanied by a rich mythology. Apart from being the creator, and giver of all good things, he is especially connected

¹ See p. 150.² Codrington, 3, p. 156.³ The full Polynesian form of the word is found in Mota in the name given to certain stones used to protect property, which are called *tangaroa*, "a name no doubt the same as that of the brothers of Qat" (Codrington, 3, p. 184). These stones are said to be the abode of a *sui* ("spirit," Codrington, 2). The word *tangaroa* is also applied to a certain kind of shark which is "a sort of familiar spirit, or the abode of one" (Codrington, 3, p. 187). The word *tangaro* is used for "a morsel of food or drop of kava . . . thrown or poured for a ghost" (Codrington, 2).⁴ Dr. Ivens has also noted the connexion between Kwat and the word *kwat* meaning "head," but thinks the connexion is with hats and *maaka* rather than with the actual head (Ivens, 2 and 3, pp. 157 ff.).⁵ Deacon, 4, pp. 623, 632. The word Ambat is applied in the first place to a single being, and in the second to five brothers, of whom he was the chief. The Kabat was also one of five brothers. He had two sons, who in turn procreated ten stones, which are regarded as the ancestors of the ten families of the Mewun village of Melpmes, where the Kabat lived.⁶ Ivens, 2. The Seniang word for "head" is *mbat(u)*. Dr. Ivens regards Kwat or Mbat as being a generic name for the people of Perry's "archaic civilization" (Ivens, 3, p. 158). For the interchangeability of the sounds *k* and *m* see p. 219, footnote 3.⁷ Tagaro's special place of abode on Maewo was called Hombio (Codrington, 3, p. 168). It may or may not be significant that the home of the Ambat of Seniang was the island of Hombi and that the homes of the dead recorded by Deacon in West and South-West Malekula were Embw (Seniang), Iambi (Lambumbu) and Hambi (Lagalag).

776 with tusked pigs and conch-shell trumpets, but above all he is, in his
 171 terrestrial aspect, associated with the sea. He is represented constantly
 as sailing in a canoe, and in almost all, if not in all, areas where he is
 known, he is represented as having finally sailed away over the horizon
 to an unknown destination. In his heavenly aspect he is invariably
 associated with light and, in one way or another, with the sun and moon.
 There is but little evidence in the northern and eastern districts of this
 area, in which he is more of a deity than a man,¹ as to what kind of race
 he or the introducers of his cult may have belonged. With regard to the
 Ambat in the Seniang district of South-West Malekula, however, who are
 regarded more as culture-heroes than as deities, they are said to have been
 white-skinned (so much so that Europeans are now called by this name),
 and to have had aquiline noses. The chief Kabat in the neighbouring
 district of Mewun is said to have been buried sitting on a stone seat
 within a stone chamber covered by a mound of earth and loose stones—
 in other words, what we in Europe would call a chambered round-barrow
 —and his body and that of his wife are said to be incorruptible. The
 alleged "undecayed body," "a sort of mummy of the Kabat" and of his
 wife, are ritually washed, thereby ensuring the continuance of the human
 race, at the recurring feast known as the "Making of Man."²

With this brief introduction, I will return now to a description of
 the attributes of Ta-ghar on Vao, prefaced by a brief summary of beliefs
 concerning the corresponding Atchin deity Ta-har.

Two attributes of Ta-har on Atchin: as deity; as culture-hero.

In Atchin the aspects of Ta-har are two-fold. In the first place he
 is the moon³ (which is also a stone), whence, according to a belief held
 very loosely by some families and quite irreconcilable with other mor-
 tuary beliefs, men come and to which they return at death. Closely
 connected with this is the belief in him as a creator who made the land
 and all men and gave the peoples of the earth their languages. On the
 other hand he is a culture-hero arriving in a canoe whence he presents
 to ten mythical petromorphic brothers, who in turn hand them on to all
 the people on the island, yams, coconuts, pigs and other necessities of life.
 Then he sails away, rewarded, according to one version, with a wife. The

¹ Except in the village of Ato Sopers, in Vanua Lava, where he is said to have been
 born, and where inhabitants claim him as their ancestor (Codrington, 3, p. 153), and in
 Maewo, where he is said to have been "a great man of old times, very high in the *supu*,
 as men used to be and are no longer now" (ibid. p. 168).

² Deacon, 4, pp. 649 ff. See also present volume, pp. 705-7.

³ This is unusual, and clearly a late belief due, presumably, to patrilineal influence.
 As we shall see below, this deity elsewhere is primarily the source of light, more usually
 associated with the sun. The Atchin belief is, however, paralleled by Suva's account,
 from Lolopuepue in Oba (1912, p. 33), that Takaro is the crescent moon, and the evil
 deity Mueragbutu or Sugbutu (p. 60) the waning moon.

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islands of Maewo, Oba and Raga are called "the land of Ta-har," and thither the youths of Atchin make pilgrimage for the sake of obtaining a specialised initiation into the mysteries of sex.¹ Detailed accounts of both these aspects will be given, with native texts, in the first of my forthcoming volumes on Atchin.

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Owing to the briefness of my stay on Vao I did not make any special enquiries about him or the mythology connected with him on this island. I am therefore unable to state to what extent he is considered on Vao as having ever been a man, except in so far as here also he is said to live on Oba, where he made the first sea-going canoes, and whence the Small Islanders derived the art of making them.

In the aspect of creator, however, he has not unnaturally been a subject of considerable interest to missionaries,² and we are fortunate in the fact that Godefroy made a special study of his creative attributes on Vao, and of the natives' attitude towards him.

GODEFROY'S ACCOUNT³

Godefroy's account is in the form of a dialogue between himself and an intelligent native named Melteg-lil-nale.⁴

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Ta-ghar a bodiless beneficent creator; opposed to La-heu-heu, the Guardian Ghost; lives in the moon and makes it shine.

When asked just how his ancestors spoke of Ta-ghar before men of his rank, his informant, after some hesitation, said:

"The old men say that Ta-ghar is like a ghost (*ta-maf*)."⁵

"Has he then no body?"

"He has no body."

"What does he do?"

"It is he who has put everything in its place. He makes the trees to

¹ See Chapter XX.

² The words Ta-ghar, Ta-har, and their equivalents in other districts, are used, by Roman Catholics, Presbyterians and Seventh Day Adventists alike, as a synonym for God. The belief universally held by natives of the New Hebrides that the white man was their god (or ancestor) returning to them, is expressed by the inhabitants of North Malekula by calling white men Ta-ghar.

³ All quotations in this section on Ta-ghar not otherwise marked are taken from Godefroy, 1, 1933, pp. 228-31 and 238-40. In the following analysis of his account it has been found necessary, for the sake of clarity, to alter the sequence of certain passages, to give certain explanations, and, in a few cases, to suggest alternative interpretations. The actual quotations, however, are quite literal.

⁴ Godefroy spells this name Melteginale, showing how the soft Melanesian *gh* at the end of the title *melteg* becomes elided.

⁵ Note he is not really a ghost, but only like one in so far as he has no body. See p. 223.

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"What do you mean, you don't know? . . . Where, then, is the sky-world?"

"We do not know."

"All the same, you often talk about your heaven, your *bakeran*?"

"That's true, but we don't know where it is."

"But, look, if Ta-ghar is up above, as you say he is, what place does he live in?"

The reply was, "He lives in the moon," and from there on the dialogue continued as already cited.

For the ethnologist and for the general reader the important point resulting from this dialogue is that, try as he would, the questioner was unable to establish any relationship between Ta-ghar and the sky-world apart from the fact that he inhabits the moon. This he later reaffirms, saying: "though they recognise the specialised occupation of Ta-ghar during a certain period of the lunar cycle, yet they do not know where he lives." In spite of this, however, he returns to his original thesis, or rather hope, by continuing: "strangely enough, they still remember the name of his kingdom [my italics], the sky; the *bakeran*, of which they often speak." This subjective lapse on the part of the reverend father is excusable only in so far as it is the only one of its kind to which, in an otherwise admirably objective account, he has succumbed. His next sentence gives us the clue to which system of native thought the conception of a so-called sky-world belongs. "During the interminable Maki rites they perform a dance which takes them to *bakeran*." This dance is possibly one of the labyrinth dances called *na-leng*, to which reference will be made later.¹ The statement makes it quite clear that the conception of *bakeran* is closely connected with the Maki, with which Ta-ghar has nothing whatever to do. The questioner's preoccupation with the conception of heaven, or the sky-world, as a place, and the natives' resistance to this idea, is shown by the statement with which he winds up his enquiry: "When one asks them, 'What is your *bakeran*, where is it?' they reply, 'We don't know; our ancestors did not tell us.' Nevertheless they have the notion that it is up above rather than down below, and that it consists of something beautiful and good." Though this last phrase would appear to smack of Christian dogma, it does, in fact, represent, but only in attenuated form, the native conception, which is not one of any place at all, but simply one of great and glorious height, typified, as we shall see when we come to discuss this rite, with the hawk's soaring upward flight.

The corresponding word *bageran*² in Atchin means "cumulus cloud," and was adopted by a native of my acquaintance as a "high" Maki title, in common with numerous similar titles indicating physical, social or moral "height." These will be discussed later when dealing with the

¹ See pp. 336 ff.

² The final syllable of this word may be connected with *ran* meaning "dawn."

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- (v) Secondly, and by analogy, as luminary, associated with the sun and to a lesser degree with the stars, and, by yet further analogy, with the clouds and winds.
- (vi) Through his association with the sun makes trees and plants to grow; but has no control over the weather.
- (vii) Is definitely not a ghost (*ta-maf*), though like one in respect of the fact that he has no body.
- (viii) Is the object of no cult or supplication, but is accepted as in all ways good.

(B) LE-HEV-HEV, THE GUARDIAN GHOST

"That which draws us to It so that It may devour us."

Having failed to discover any marked emotional attitude on the part of the natives towards Ta-ghar, Godefroy asked:

"Who then is it that you do think of?"

And was met with the reply:

"Of that other, of that which wishes to devour us as soon as we are dead."

"And what do you call him?"

"Le-hev-hev."

"Who is Le-hev-hev?"

"Le-hev-hev means: That which draws us to It so that It may devour us."¹

Le-hev-hev, the sexless Guardian Ghost.

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Le-hev-hev is the sexless Guardian Ghost, who bars the way into the land of the dead. As I have stated elsewhere,² it is not known on Vao whether this Being is a man or a woman, or indeed something that is neither one nor the other. All that is known about its nature is that it is "irresponsible and in all things defiant."³ The Vao language does not differentiate between genders, so there is no help from that quarter.

The first syllable of the name, *Le-*, is the present-day feminine prefix with which every woman's name in all the Small Islands begins. In Atchin the name for the corresponding figure is *Le-saw-saw*, where it is definitely regarded as a woman, maternal grandmother of the ten petromorphic brothers to whom Ta-har is said to have appeared in a canoe and to whom he introduced food-stuffs and pigs.⁴ Owing to the law of sound-change by which Atchin *s* becomes *h* in Vao and *w* is softened to *v*, *Le-saw-saw* and *Le-hev-hev* are philologically the same word. The

¹ Godefroy, 1, 1933, pp. 228-9.

² Layard, 4, p. 119.

³ See p. 606 for tale of a man who for this reason called himself *Le-hev-hev* because he had killed his sister's son.

⁴ See future volume on Atchin.

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essential name, shorn of the prefix *Le-*, is thus seen to be *Saw*, seen also in *Te-mes Sav-sap*,¹ the name of the Guardian Ghost recorded by Deacon in Seniang, where, though it is regarded as a woman, the prefix *Le-* is absent. Among the Big Nambas we find an intermediate form *Li-sev-sep*,² where the vowel and final consonant are the same as in *Vao*, but the *s* has not been softened into *h*. All these names are equivalent to that of the *Suge*, *Sukwe* or *Supwe*,³ the corresponding male figure in the mythology of the Northern New Hebrides and Banks Islands, of whom it is said in Maewo that "Tagaro came down from heaven, made men and other things, and went back again to heaven. *Suge* belonged to the earth; his head was forked, therefore he had two thoughts in it. Whatever Tagaro did or made was right, *Suge* was always wrong. . . . Tagaro sent him to a place where is a bottomless chasm, somewhere inland in Araga [Raga], where he rules over the ghosts of the dead."⁴

As will be seen from the sketch-map on p. 206, this Being, further variants of whose name are *Supu*, *Sugbu*, *Supua*, *Le-sio-siv*,⁵ etc., has a distribution considerably greater than the area covered by the creator-deities of the Ta-garo-Kwat-Ambat complex, and belongs almost certainly to an older layer of culture.⁶

The Guardian Ghost regarded as male in matrilineal areas but as female in patrilineal areas.

The question of the sex of this Being is of the greatest interest. In the Northern New Hebrides, where the kinship system is matrilineal, the Guardian Ghost *Supwe* is said to be male; in all parts of Malekula and the Small Islands, however, where kinship is overtly patrilineal, this same Being (known by the variants of the same name already cited) is, except in *Vao*, regarded as female. To this the writer can see no possible explanation other than a psychological one, namely, that in those areas in which conscious attention is directed chiefly towards the female line of descent, the unconscious which gives rise to the myth compensates for this undue emphasis on the female side by envisaging the Guardian Ghost as male; while in those areas in which conscious attention is concentrated

¹ See p. 651.

² Deacon, 4, p. 585. *Li-sev-sep* is also the name of the highest rank in the women's secret association called *Langambas* in Lagalag (Deacon, 4, p. 495).

³ The consonants *q*, *kw* and *pw* all represent the same sound, which is a mixture of *kmbu* or *kmpu*, varying from dialect to dialect, for which the sign *q* has been adopted as a convention by the Melanesian Mission. Sounds having the same origin become in Malekula and the Small Islands *mb*, *b*, *p*, *v* or *w*.

⁴ Codrington, 3, p. 169.

⁵ In North Raga and Oba this Being is replaced by a special aspect of Ta-garo, namely Tagaro-lawua (Codrington, 3, p. 170), who is found also in *Vao* under the name of Ta-ghar Lawo with *Le-hev-hev* in the Cave of the Dead (see p. 227).

⁶ The same name is found even further afield in Nguna under the form *Sugbu* (Capell, 1, p. 71, quoting Milne).

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776 on the male line, the unconscious compensates by envisaging this figure
as female.¹

171 Of all the Small Islands, Vao, though at first sight as patrilineal as
the rest, is in fact geographically the nearest to the matrilineal area, and
in its kinship system gives due weight to both lines of descent. This
possibly explains the uncertainty existing there in regard to the sex of the
Guardian Ghost, since there neither line of descent is too greatly over-
emphasised.

Closely connected with the predominate line of descent is the name
of the graded society itself. As already mentioned in the Introduction,
this society is closely connected with the Guardian Ghost, and is, in one
of its aspects, an actual representation of the journey of the dead. The
interesting fact is that in the matrilineal areas this society is called by the
same name as the Guardian Ghost; in the Banks Islands it is called
Sukue, and in Malo, where it appears to have been very similar to the
present Vao Maki, its name is *Sumbe*.² In the patrilineal area of Male-
kula, and in Ambrim, it is, on the other hand, called by variants of the
word *Maki* (*Mangki*, *Mangke*, *Mengge*, etc.).³ This suggests an even
closer connexion between the Guardian Ghost and the graded society in
the matrilineal area than exists in the predominately patrilineal islands of
Malekula and Ambrim.

Title of old men of high rank equivalent to Le-hev-hev and Supwe.

776 A further fact of first-class importance, both as indication of the close
554 connexion existing between the two graded society-complexes and of the
aspirations underlying both, is that the honourable title for old men of high
rank used in ordinary parlance is actually a variant of the word used for the
Guardian Ghost, namely *na-sup* in Atchin, *na-humbe*⁴ in Vao. Thus old
men of high rank are *ipso facto* identified with the Guardian Ghost.⁵ This
fact is of the highest importance in understanding the significance of the

¹ Thus, in classical mythology, among the patrilineal Greeks and Romans, the
Guardian of the cave from which access to the land of the dead is had, is female, i.e. the
sibyl (see Knight), whereas in matrilineal Egypt the corresponding figure is male.
There are, however, certain exceptions, such as the Tubuan of the Dukduk society in
the Gazelle Peninsula, New Britain, who is female, though the system of descent is
matrilineal. These figures are all guardians; in all cases the ruler of the dead appears
to be male, e.g. Anrum Mbwirei in Senieng (Deacon, 4, p. 556), Mal-kalaut in Vao,
Mol in the Tasmaut district of Santo.

A curious feature is that the names of a number of undoubtedly male culture-heroes
in the Small Islands as semi-historical figures also have the prefix *Le-*. Whether this
also indicates a compensatory psychological process or whether these names have been
adopted by men from female mythological figures, as Asaor (see below, p. 606) adopted
the name of *Le-hev-hev*, I am unable to say.

² Rivers, 3. For other variants of the word see pp. 274, 691, 693.

³ See pp. 691-2.

⁴ It is this title which Godefroy translates "chief." See note on p. 233. This is not
to be confused with the titles attached to names such as *Mal*, *Melug*, etc. (see pp. 431 ff.).

⁵ See p. 258.

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whole graded society-complex. Its ritual and mythological significance will become abundantly clear as we proceed with the examination of these aspects of culture. Psychologically the implication is that if, as we have seen, the Guardian Ghost represents the reverse side of the social structure, so also does it represent the reverse side of the part played by the individual in the Maki. The extraverted bravado and extreme self-assertion associated with this dionysiac performance is thus seen to be balanced by a ferocious self-accusing monster lurking in the performer's unconscious. It is perhaps significant in this context that the natives of Vao, whose Guardian Ghost is sexless, are notably the mildest and most urbane of the Small Islanders.¹

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Le-hev-hev referred to as "It."

Since the Vao language gives us no clue as to the correct way to refer to this sexless Guardian Ghost, and since in English it is necessary to use a differentiated pronoun, the obvious way out of the difficulty, and one which to my mind accords most nearly with the native conception, is to use the pronoun "It" with a capital "I" to indicate personification.

Guardian Ghost as "Spider" in neighbouring islands.

The Vao definition of Le-hev-hev is, as we have seen, "That which draws us to It so that It may devour us." Godefroy, on one occasion, actually refers to It as a "beast." Speiser is still more explicit, referring to it as "a crab-like monster with two immense claws."² Before examining the Vao beliefs, it will therefore be worth while to make brief mention of the non-human aspect of the Guardian Ghost in neighbouring islands. This is most strikingly shown in the equation, at Lakona on Santa Maria (Banks Islands), of Supwe with Marawa, the Spider.³ No explanation is given by Codrington for this at first sight curious identification, but, if we look at it in the light of the Vao definition of Le-hev-hev, it is clear that the spider sitting in its web is also symbolic of "that which draws us to It so that It may devour us." This is clearly the basic reason for the selection of the spider as symbolic of Supwe. There are, however, two interesting extensions of the idea. The first is in a Mota account of how Marawa, the Spider, "spun a line from earth to heaven" in order that a man might carry up his child to join its mother, who had ascended thither in the smoke of a fire.⁴ Possibly connected with this story is the

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¹ According to Harrison and to Godefroy, this is no longer the case. The latter refers to the natives of Rano as "quarrelsome," of Wala as "pert," of Vao as "sour-faced," but of Atchin as "having soft and polished manners." Let it be noted, however, that conditions have changed. In the three first a new morality has been adopted. Atchin alone is without a Mission Station.

² Speiser, 1, p. 68. For details see below, p. 228, note 1.

³ Codrington, 3, p. 157.

⁴ Ibid., 3, p. 383.

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776 name of Marawa ("spider") given to one of the early *Tamale* Societies
171 which may be entered by a baby in arms.¹

The other extension is more interesting, since it provides a connexion between the spider's web and the mortuary labyrinth mythology of Seniang, in South-West Bay. In the mythology of that area the Guardian Ghost sits by a cave on the sea-shore, having drawn beside her on the sand a labyrinth figure which the ghost of the dead man on his way to the Land of the Dead must know how to complete. If he cannot do this, she eats him. The drawing of labyrinth designs, based on the above myth but now largely secular in character, is a common pastime all over the Northern New Hebrides, where they are drawn with the finger in ashes or sand.² It is easy to understand how the spider's web spun by the Guardian Ghost in one area should become associated with the labyrinth design drawn by the Guardian Ghost in another. A tale combining both motives comes from South Raga, and relates how one day the deity, there called Barkulkul, when leaving his house, left his wife in it and "shut the door by making, with a liana, a design similar to a spider's web." When he came back, finding the design disturbed, he went to the men's house, where he said to the men, "Let us make drawings." They made drawings in the ashes, similar to spiders' webs, and when Barkulkul saw that his brother Marrelul made the same design as Barkulkul himself had made, he knew that it was he who had entered his house in his absence and seduced his wife. And so he killed him.³ This story is, of course, a degraded one, but serves to show the widespread symbolism of the spider's web as a labyrinthine structure with a devouring monster in its midst.

Guardian Ghost as "*Megapode*."

Another interesting piece of symbolism in connexion with the Guardian Ghost is that found in North Raga, where Subwe is also called Malau,⁴ which means bush-turkey, or megapode. This remarkable bird has huge claws, with which it digs long tunnels into the ground in which to lay its eggs.⁵ The habits of the bird are largely nocturnal, and at night it emits wailing cries. These cries are associated with ghosts, and the tunnelling activity recalls the underground world where the Guardian Ghost lives, which, in the case of Vao, is, as we shall see, a cave. Yet further, the megapode favours volcanic soil on account of the extra warmth it supplies for hatching eggs,⁶ and volcanoes are also, as we shall see, connected with

¹ Rivers, 1, vol. I, p. 110.

² See Chapter XXV.

³ Tattevin, 2, 1929, p. 988.

⁴ Rivers, 1, vol. I, p. 189. Compare also Atimis Malau in South-West Bay.

⁵ The New Hebridean megapode, *megapodius layardi*, does not build mounds like other members of the species (see p. 752). In Matanavat on the north coast of Malekula, the bird, there called *mola*, is semi-sacred. "If one village gives a scrub-turkey to another, that is a token of permanent peace." Such exchange is there even more sacred than the exchange of hawks (Harrison, 2, p. 55).

⁶ Rivers, 1, vol. II, p. 461.

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the life of the dead. Marawa, the Spider, also lived with Qat, at a place "where the volcanic fires still smoulder" near Lakona, on Santa Maria.¹

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Guardian Ghost symbolised by the "Rat."

Another account, from Olal in Ambrim, tells how the Guardian Ghost, here called Bugliam, the god of night and darkness, has as its symbol the rat,² because it burrows underground.

Relations between Guardian Ghost and sky-deity become progressively dissociated as kinship systems become more patrilineal.

Before returning to the details of the Vao material, one further aspect of the Guardian Ghost remains to be discussed, namely, its relation to the sky-deity. We have already seen that the name Ta-ghar, allied to the Polynesian Tangaroa, appears to represent a comparatively late cultural drift. This does not necessarily mean, however, that his attributes are exclusively associated with his name. If we examine the mythology connected with neighbouring gods who do not bear this name, such as Tautai in the Tismulun of Santo, and Barkulkul in South Raga, we find, indeed, the interesting fact that, while in their terrestrial aspect (i.e. as men having once walked on earth) they differ greatly, in their spiritual aspect as beneficent creator-gods dwelling in the sky they are remarkably uniform. The two aspects may be classed respectively as cultural and psychological. That is to say, that when, as we shall shortly see in the Vao account, Ta-ghar and Le-hev-hev are said to have nothing whatever to do with one another, this fact may be true from the point of view of the names they bear, that is to say their cultural aspect, but it by no means alters the fact that they are psychologically complementary. One represents the conscious striving, the other the unconscious fears. It is well known that in the case of individuals the greater our state of dissociation the higher are our ideals and the more abysmal our fears. The same is true of cultures. We have already noted the unconscious factor working with regard to the sex of the Guardian Ghost, which is, in the areas under consideration, the reverse of that dominating the conscious social structure. A similar process may be seen at work in the relations between the creator-god and the corresponding Guardian Ghost. This may be briefly illustrated from mythology, from which it will be seen that the relations between the two become more and more strained the further they recede from the matrilineal area in the north, with a comparatively simple graded society, towards the predominately patrilineal area in the

¹ Codrington, 3, p. 157. Compare also the expression *Malau gan Qat*, "megapode the food of Qat," meaning sulphur such as is found in the solfataras in Vanua Lava, and at Lakona (Codrington, 2).

² Suas, 1911, pp. 906 ff.

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776 south, with its tremendously complicated and expensive ritual ex-
171 hibitionism.

Five areas will suffice to show the progressive state of dissociation. If we take first the Banks Islands, we find that Qat made everything himself, excepting Night, for the making of which he had to invite the aid of the deity called by that name.¹ There is no obvious conflict here at all.

In the western part of Oba, where Tagaro is the deity and does the creating, there is still no true Guardian Ghost, the less reputable aspects of society being represented (as they are also in the case of Qat) by aspects of Tagaro himself under the guise of brothers, chief of whom is Tagaro-lawua, the Big, who "was a boaster and incapable."²

In Eastern Oba we find the first obvious trace of dualism in the figure of Suqe. Tagaro made everything right, and Suqe made everything wrong, but still "Suqe shares the work of creation with Tagaro. They two made the land, and the things upon it."³ There was as yet no definite separation between the two.

There is, however, an interesting Oba tale published by Codrington, according to which Tagaro the Little has a conch-shell trumpet in his hand, and when Mera-mbuto, who is another form of Suqe, asks what it is, he says, "The voice of you and me." Mera-mbuto says, "Wait a bit till I go back to my dwelling-place [which is a cave] . . . then you shall speak with the voice of us two that I may hear it for myself." Tagaro blew and Mera-mbuto's brothers fell everyone from the tree in which they were. Mera-mbuto himself was delighted and jumped high again and again in his cave, and his head struck against the rock and the rock stuck fast into his head, and there he died.⁴ In this tale we see Tagaro tricking the Guardian Ghost for aspiring to equal him.

In North Raga the conflict takes on a more serious and definitely religious form. Here it is said of Suqe that "his head was forked, therefore he had two thoughts in it," and Tagaro sends him "to a place where there is a bottomless chasm . . . where he rules over the ghosts of the dead."⁵ Still, Suqe, though banished, is not destroyed, and for the last stage of dissociation we have to go a little further south, to South Raga, where the good deity is Barkulkul, and the ghosts of the dead go to a place where is the Guardian Ghost called Marrelul, "killed by Barkulkul for having disobeyed his orders, together with the snake that had been burnt in the men's house."⁶

¹ Codrington, 3, pp. 156-7.

² Ibid., 3, p. 170.

³ Ibid., 3, p. 171. Suas (1912, pp. 45-7) recounts also how the two boys Takaro and Mueragbuto (= Suqe), ancestors of the two matrilineal moieties, came from the same mother, Takaro feeding from her right breast and Mueragbuto from her left.

⁴ Ibid. pp. 400-10.

⁵ Ibid. p. 169.

⁶ Taittevin, 1, 1926, p. 394. For the full story of the burning of the snake see Taittevin, 2, 1929, pp. 991-3. This is a common theme all over this area.

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Le-hev-hev a bodiless spirit, like Ta-ghar; inspires fear. Connexion with Maki. 776

Let us now see how the Guardian Ghost is regarded in Vao.

"Le-hev-hev," as we have seen, means: "That which draws us to It so that It may devour us."

The next question was:

"You say It wants to eat you? How? With Its teeth?"

"No, not with Its teeth; It is like Ta-ghar, It has no body, It is like a ghost (*ta-mat*). It's terrible. . . . We are in great fear of It, and think only of It; whereas we think but rarely of Ta-ghar. There is no connexion between them. Ta-ghar is one thing and Le-hev-hev another.¹

"It is to save ourselves from Le-hev-hev that we sacrifice our pigs, that we dance, and that we perform all our rites."²

This phrase refers not only to the Maki, but also to every sacrificial rite on the Small Islands, even those ostensibly to individual ancestors, since, as we shall see, one of the essential aspects of the Maki is the attainment of oneness with this figure who is the embodiment of all ancestors, and the propitiating of it so that the sacrificer may obtain entry into the life after death.³

Having now indicated the deeply emotional character of the attitude towards Le-hev-hev, I will here give my own record of the dead man's dealings with Le-hev-hev and of his journey to the land where his deceased forefathers carry on their existence after death.

THE JOURNEY OF THE DEAD (AUTHOR'S ACCOUNT)⁴

Summary of elements common to Vao, Atchin and Wala.

The author obtained three accounts of the Journey of the Dead of high rank, from the three islands of Vao, Atchin and Wala. All three accounts agree that the dead man first enters a cave, close to the long black-sand beach, in Vao called Ghoramp and in Atchin Orap, situated on the Malekulan mainland between the islands of Atchin and Wala. Having passed through this cave he then proceeds down the coast of Malekula to a promontory called Bong-na-un on the Malekulan mainland facing the

¹ Godefroy adds: "Ta-ghar has his own personal occupations, and Le-hev-hev has his which have nothing to do with Ta-ghar." This is, however, not entirely accurate, as will be seen below (see p. 227).

² *Ibid.*, I, 1933, p. 229.

³ See p. 237.

⁴ Here reproduced, with minor alterations, by kind permission of Professor C. G. Seligman and Messrs. Kegan Paul, from *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, London, 1934, pp. 119 ff. For best summaries of comparative material see Rivers, I, vol. II, pp. 261 ff. and Williamson, I, chapters on "The Soul after Death," and comparative tables at end of vol. II.

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171 island of Ambrim. Here he lights a beacon, to attract the attention of a ghostly ferryman; and is then ferried over to Ambrim, where he mounts the volcano where the dead carry on their blissful existence, dancing all night and, according to the different accounts, either sleeping or becoming disintegrated during the day. Somewhere on the route (the versions differ as to where) the dead man encounters the Guardian Ghost, who tries to eat him, but is placated by the presentation of a pig, placed in the dead man's grave during his mortuary rites, on receipt of which the Guardian Ghost ceases to molest him, and he passes safely on his way.

Chief differences between Vao and other versions.

The three versions differ considerably in detail, notably—

(a) In the position of the Guardian Ghost, who in the Vao version is met with in the cave, but in the Wala (and by implication also in the Atchin) version stands in the form of a natural monolithic block on the reef at Bong-na-un.

(b) In knowledge of the dead man's doings on the journey, much of which is known on Atchin and Wala, but nothing at all on Vao.

(c) In the fact that in the Wala version the dead are said to dance as skeletons and their heads to fall off and their bodies fall asunder at dawn, when the bare bones remain lying on the ground till sundown, when they reassemble to resume their nightly dance. This belief is vehemently denied on Vao, where the natives conceive of their dead as carrying on life in the form of ordinary disembodied ghosts.

VAO VERSION

I will here give the Vao version only.

Burial at sundown. Pigs killed for presentation to Le-heo-heo.

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775 Old men of grades *na-humbe* and *mer-sean* are buried in the squatting position.¹ Burial occurs at sundown, the moment when the nightly dance of the dead begins. The body is arrayed in all the finery and insignia due to the dead man for the rank which he has attained in the Maki rites. Immediately before inhumation, the first of a series of communion feasts is held,² in which a morsel of food is placed actually in the mouth of the dead man. The body is wrapped in fine mats, and a live pig thrown into the grave.³ Though, according to one belief, the dead man immediately joins his ancestors, and is therefore buried at sundown in order that he may forthwith join in the nightly dance, according to another he takes

¹ See Mortuary Rites, p. 331.

² See p. 342.

³ See p. 341.

775 over. And when he saw that it was a Vao man, he paddled back to
 773 Ambrim and told all the dead from Vao to come over and fetch the new-
 comer. This they did, and the two Atchin women went with him to
 Ambrim. When they arrived there, one of the women was frightened,
 and said to the other, "I've begged you all the time to go back but you
 would not, and now you really see that this is not a man, but a ghost;
 and here we are among nothing but the dead."

And they stayed there seven nights. And every evening, when the
 crickets¹ began to sing, they saw the bones of the dead join together and
 become alive, and they watched them dance till their heads fell off at the
 rising of the morning star. And at dawn after the seventh night the head
 of the man they had accompanied fell off also.²

But now the unusual happened. For the Atchin women must return
 home, but could not find their way alone. So this man became alive, and
 said, "I will take you back to Atchin." And he still had his wand. So,
 having ferried them over to Gunsin Te-mets, he walked northward with
 them along the coast, and whenever they came to a river he struck the
 waters with his wand, so that they parted and the three walked through
 on dry ground. And he went with them till they came to the "Cave of
 the Dead," where he left them, saying "*Ko reldrel e matur, ko reldrel e
 mairi*,"³ and himself returned to Ambrim.

The two women returned alone to Atchin, but straightway died. But
 the Atchin people brought them back to life by kneeling on their chests
 and suddenly releasing the pressure, so that the breath came back into
 their bodies.⁴

When they came back to life they related all that they had seen.
 And that is how it is known that the dead go to Ambrim and that after
 seven days their heads fall off, and why care is taken to kill a fowl at
 death and to place a wand with the body in the grave.

775 Brief analysis of the Vao version of the story into two layers in the earlier of
 171 which the dead have their home in the cave.

As I have shown, the Vao version of the story of the dead man's
 journey to the volcano on Ambrim is much shorter than those told on
 Atchin and on Wala, and differs from them in several material respects.
 In the article mentioned above⁵ all three versions are told and the various

¹ Called in Wala *bong le muisi*.

² This refers to the Wala version mentioned above. The newly arrived ghost's bones
 do not fall asunder till the seventh night. Seven days represents the probationary period
 in the newer form of culture existing on Wala, as opposed to the five-day period belong-
 ing to the older culture represented on Vao.

³ The translation of this is doubtful. The dialect is that of Wala. It probably
 means "he dances from the time of lying down to sleep to the time of rising."

⁴ This method of artificial respiration is called, in the language of Wala, *mu wushi
 lulu ni*, "he brings it back."

⁵ Layard, 4.

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elements analysed into successive layers of belief. This method of historical analysis will be extended later when the whole of my field-material is in print. For details the reader interested in such matters is referred to the article in question. It is enough here to point out that of the three versions, that held on Vao is clearly the older, but that even this version is itself composed of two entirely distinct layers. The fact that, in the Vao version, in spite of living on the volcano, the dead are said also to be present in the cave, and that both Le-hev-hev and Ta-ghar Lawo are met with there, is a plain indication that at one time the cave, and not the volcano, must have been the dead man's goal. It is thus clear that the volcano story is later, and superimposed on a previous belief in a home of the dead within the cave. In the Atchin and Wala versions, the dead do in fact go through a cave, but do not meet their dead relatives there, nor yet Le-hev-hev, the position of the Guardian Ghost being in these versions transferred to the Malekulan promontory of Bong-na-un from which the dead are ferried over to Ambrim. This shows a more complete acceptance of the superimposed volcano myth than is held on Vao. The severance from the older story is made more obvious by the complete disappearance of Ta-ghar Lawo, who does not figure in the Wala and Atchin stories.

GODEFROY'S ACCOUNT

Let us now turn to Godefroy's account, and find what additional information is to be gained from it.

In the first place, we find immediate confirmation of the analytical method in the study of mythology outlined above in that, according to him, the natives themselves recognise quite clearly a sharp distinction between the two concurrently held conceptions of a home of the dead, on the one hand in a cave and on the other in the volcano on Ambrim.

According to his account there are two separate beliefs, and these two beliefs concern two layers of society. Those who have not taken Maki rank eke out their life after death in caves, while the home of the dead in the volcano is reserved only for those who have attained high rank. According to him, those who go on to the volcano do not enter a cave at all. This seems to me unlikely, since in all the versions I collected the cave is at least passed through on the way. Whether this omission is due to a degeneration of belief during the last twenty years, or whether it is real, the existence of the two beliefs side by side confirms even more completely than might have been expected the results of a purely analytical examination of the longer story, and affords conclusive proof that the belief in the home of the dead within the cave is in fact the older, since belief in the volcano myth is quite definitely associated with the later, monolithic, form of Maki.

CHAPTER X

PIGS

231 SINCE it is impossible to describe any aspect of Small Island culture without reference to pigs, I propose now to devote a chapter to these animals.

It is frequently assumed by white men in the Pacific that the pig was introduced by Captain Cook. This is, of course, not the case. Pigs were observed in neighbouring islands in large quantities by Quiros in 1606, and the cult of the pig is in any case too deeply rooted in native culture for such recent introduction to have been possible. The Malekulan pig belongs to the breed known as *Sus papuensis*, found all over Melanesia, as well as in New Guinea.¹ Nowhere, however, is its culture developed to such a high degree as in the Northern New Hebrides, in which area two characteristics mark it out from all other branches of the species. Both these characteristics are due to the hand of man.

Intersex pigs.

The first is the rearing of intersex pigs. This practice is far from universal, even in this area, being confined to the most northerly islands of the group, namely, Maewo, Oba, Raga, Santo and Malo. It does not take place in Malekula, though the phenomenon is well known to Malekulans, and figures in Small Island mythology. It therefore does not immediately concern us here.²

Artificial elongation of tusks.

What does concern us is the more widespread practice of artificially inducing the growth of the tusks. This practice lies at the base of the natives' whole overt religious life, gives rise to the chief form of currency, and so largely regulates all their economic activities, and, as I have said, permeates every aspect of life.

The means by which the tusks are induced to grow is a very simple one, and consists in knocking out the upper canines, so that the tusks, having

¹ Godefroy (1, 1934, p. 50) says that they are now crossed with European pigs of various breeds. This is a very new development, which had not started at the time of my visit. It apparently does not hinder the growth of artificially elongated tusks described below.

² Intersex (hermaphrodite) pigs are mentioned by Codrington, 3, pp. 57 and 80, and by Rivers, 1, vol. I, pp. 38, 80, 98 and 107, and have been studied also from the biological point of view by Dr. John Baker (1, 2, 3 and 4 (Chapter V)).

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and the sacrifice of tusked boars, and this holds true throughout the whole of the area under consideration. The close connexion with the public graded institution is seen also by the fact that in the Banks Islands, where entrance to the Sukwe is paid for with shell-money, conch-shell signals are blown for the shell-money as well as for pigs.¹ The blowing of conch-shell signals is important also in connexion with mortuary rites. In the North and North-Central New Hebrides, they are blown during the sacrifice of the tusked boars with which the dead man placates the Guardian Ghost. In other parts, such as in the Banks Islands, conch-shell trumpets are blown during mortuary rites on the fifth day after death "to drive away ghosts,"² apparently without specific reference to pigs. In Matanavat, in North Malekula, they are blown after a man has struck the forehead of the hanging body of a man killed in warfare to "make this place clean again."³ This is an instance of human sacrifice which has been replaced in everyday ritual by the sacrifice of pigs. Conch-shell trumpets are thus primarily connected with ideas connected with death and with sacrifice, primarily of human beings, and secondarily, though much more commonly, of pigs.

(b) *Connected with Tagaro and inimicable to the Guardian Ghost.*

Yet another aspect of the blowing of conch-shell trumpets is their connexion with sky-deities of the Kwat-Ambat-Tagaro cycle. This also is not unconnected with pigs, since it is this deity who, in several places, is accredited with having introduced tusked boars,⁴ which then, in their capacity as sacrificial animals, become associated with the Guardian Ghost. This leads us back to questions of mythology. We have already seen how the blowing of conch-shell trumpets signalises the sacrifice of tusked boars, and we have seen also how in Vao these animals represent the Guardian Ghost. The conch-shell trumpet is thus the signal of victory over the Guardian Ghost. This means also that it is the signal of victory over death, whence their use in the Banks Islands to drive away the ghost of a dead man on the fifth day after death, that is to say, the day on which the dead man, through the sacrifice of tusked boars, becomes immortal.⁵ This is why, also, in the Oba story quoted above,⁶ the brothers of the Guardian Ghost, there called Mera-mbuto, are slain by the sound of the conch-shell trumpet blown by Tagaro, and Mera-mbuto himself is killed by jumping about in his cave and dashing his head accidentally against a rock, which pierces it, just as tusked boars are slain by being struck on the head. In this same tale, Tagaro tricked Mera-mbuto by telling him

¹ Rivers, 1, vol. I, pp. 67, 76.² Codrington, 3, pp. 266-7.³ Harrison, 2, p. 54.⁴ For examples of legends told in Atchin how Ta-har gave tusked boars to man, see future volumes.⁵ See p. 544.⁶ See p. 224.

534 that the trumpet was "the voice of you and me," but it turned out to be the voice of Tagaro alone, through which Mera-mbuto the earth-bound was destroyed.

(c) *The power of the voice.*

An extension of this power of the voice is seen in Codrington's account, from the Banks Islands, of how a great man about to make a feast would perform a charm over certain leaves; he would then "chew and puff all night to get *mana*"; in the morning he would blow his shell trumpet to spread abroad the influence of his leaves, which would . . . draw a multitude to the feast."¹ For the same reason, coupled with their use in connexion with pigs, conch-shell trumpets are particularly associated with chiefs and men of high rank throughout the group. They are also associated with trading expeditions in long-distance canoes, the return of which is invariably heralded by the sound of conch-shell signals resounding over the water to announce the number and value of tusked boars that have been acquired. So also, before any rite at which tusked boars are to be presented, the approaching party from another village halts in the bush on the outskirts of the dancing-ground, and the sound of the trumpets moaning through the trees falls as sweet music on the ears of those awaiting them. In the Small Islands conch-shell trumpets are usually blown singly or in pairs. Deacon, however, records nine conch-shell trumpets blown together before a mass sacrifice of pigs at Lam-bumbu in North Malekula, where there appear to be hereditary chiefs.²

BRIEF COMPARATIVE SURVEY

171 Comparative studies outside the Northern New Hebrides are outside the scope of this book, but the artificial elongation of pigs' tusks in this area is one of such peculiar importance that I feel justified in summarising here briefly the results of Speiser's enquiry into its distribution and into some of the motives that underlie it.³

Speiser points out in the first place that, despite the universal distribution of the pig in all other parts of Melanesia, this animal was, before the coming of the white man, unknown in New Caledonia. This indicates that the pig was not brought by the earliest migrants from Indonesia.

Though pigs form an integral part of native culture throughout the rest of Melanesia, there is, however, only one area in which their tusks

¹ Codrington, 3, p. 111.

² Deacon, 4, p. 368. On this page also Deacon reproduces the chords played. My own detailed records of conch-shell signals blown on Atchin will appear in a future volume. Speiser (3, p. 422) says that at a death feast on Vao conch-shell trumpets are blown through a bamboo tube inserted into the hole. I am myself not aware of this practice.

³ Speiser, 5, pp. 441-4; and 6, pp. 145 and

are artificially elongated. This area is that of the Banks Islands and the Northern and Central New Hebrides, but does not include the Southern New Hebrides.¹ The distribution of this custom thus coincides almost exactly with that of the public graded society as outlined in Chapter XXVI.

We have already seen how the organisation of the graded society on Vao depends on the sacrifice of tusked boars, and how the ranks in the society correspond with the various stages in the elongation of the tusks. This close association of rank with length of tusk is not so precisely worked out in all islands, in many of which, as also in Vao, the number of tusked boars that are sacrificed plays a large part and in some cases is the most important factor. In the whole area over which the graded society is spread, however, the sacrifice of boars with artificially elongated tusks is an essential part of the rite.

Outside this area, according to Speiser,² the only two regions from which the artificial elongation of boars' tusks has been reported are:

- (a) The district around Arue,³ a small island off the south coast of New Britain in the Bismarck Archipelago; and
- (b) Nias, the well-known megalithic centre lying off the south-west coast of Sumatra.

In both areas the tusked boar is an important sacrificial animal.

Associated with artificial elongation of the human head.

Speiser further points out that, so far as the New Hebrides is concerned, the area in which artificial elongation of pigs' tusks has reached its highest stage of development is Malekula, and is of the opinion that it is here closely associated with the South Malekulan practice of artificially elongating the human head.⁴ This practice, in the particular form in which it is done in Malekula, is not found anywhere else in Melanesia, but is found also in Arue, where the inhabitants are, as a consequence, referred to by their neighbours as "long-heads."⁵

¹ Speiser, 6, p. 159; 3, pp. 450, 454.

² Speiser, 5, pp. 441 ff.; 6, pp. 158 ff.

³ Also spelt Aruwe, Aruwi.

⁴ Speiser, 6, p. 158. This practice has long been known, but was first fully described in Layard, 2, p. 220. It is closely associated with the light-skinned immigrant culture-heroes called Ambat referred to on p. 210.

⁵ Dingwall, 3, p. 136. This monumental and erudite work is, and is likely to remain for a long time, the standard treatise on head deformation throughout the world. The practice is almost always associated with ruling classes and, in Oceania, with aristocratic immigrants. In some places, as in Malekula and Arue, it is carried out with great care by binding the heads of infants from a very early age. Various degraded forms of the practice are found in other parts of Melanesia. In none of these places, however, is it carried out to the full extent that it is in South Malekula, and Speiser is therefore quite justified in referring to this as the only area in Melanesia in which it can properly be said to exist.

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171 Speiser therefore deduces a direct cultural connexion between Nias, Arue and Malekula, which appears to have been

- (a) recent, owing to the comparatively recent development of the practice in Malekula, to which reference has already been made; and
- (b) direct, since there is no evidence of it on intermediate islands.

In Arue the rearing of tusked boars is the prerogative of chiefs. Details of rite correspond with those of the Maki in Malekula.

We have already seen how, in the New Hebrides, the public graded society, depending as it does on the sacrifice of tusked boars, was originally an aristocratic institution, as it still is among the Big Nambas of North Malekula, where only hereditary chiefs take rank. In the same way, in Arue "only hereditary chiefs have the right to rear tusked boars, the rearing of these being forbidden to commoners, who are only allowed to possess ordinary pigs. The sacrifice of tusked boars was performed for a chief's son by his father." So also does the ritual of Arue agree in a number of details with that of Malekula. Among other things, the Vao custom of mass sacrifice by those of lower ranks while those of high degree take new rank by sacrificing special tuskers, is paralleled in Arue by the fact that, while the chiefs sacrificed their tusked boars, "the commoners brought their ordinary pigs, which are then sacrificed at the same time as the tuskers." In Arue too, as in Vao, parts of the sacrificed tusker are distributed to others to eat, and "those who had received the head must take off its jaw and return it to the sacrificer." Again, "after a man's death, the son would sacrifice tusked boars at his father's grave with the expressed intent that the boars' souls should provide food for his father in the after-world."¹ From this and other evidence, Speiser is justified in drawing the conclusion that the chiefly ritual in Arue represents at least one link in the chain by which the ritual of the Maki was formed, and particularly that part of it that is connected with the rearing of boars with artificially elongated tusks.

Connexion of boars' tusks with daemonic powers.

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532 Speiser also makes some interesting observations on the connexion of pigs with a destructive daemonic power. At the Malekulan end of the scale he instances the well-known masks and images connected with secret societies in the southern and south-western parts of the island, which are also those in which the human head is artificially elongated. The masks represent human heads, and to the mouths of these, as well as of some of the images, boars' tusks are attached, giving them both the

¹ Speiser, 6, p. 162.

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appearance of a being which is half man, half boar.¹ In some cases also such tusks are even attached to the remodelled elongated skulls of dead ancestors.² He then points out that, while in Malekula the tusks are attached only to images and masks, and to the skulls of the dead, in Arue they are actually worn by men, and that this practice is intimately connected with that of human sacrifice. I have already mentioned how, in Arue as in Malekula, the jaw of a sacrificed boar must be returned to the chief who sacrificed it. In Arue the tusks are then removed and bound together, after which "the chief gives them to one of his followers, who must then kill a man, and, in the act of killing him, must hold the tusks in his mouth." Only by this means do the tusks become sanctified, and fit to be worn by the chief as his badge of sacrifice. This practice was also extended to the use of boars' tusks as amulets in war, when "they were divided among the warriors, and during battle, as at the time of their consecration, each warrior took a pair of them in his mouth in such a way that the tusks appeared to grow out of the corners of his mouth" as out of a pig's jaw. In this way warriors acquired strength for the fight. In Nias, where metals are known, a later development of the same custom is seen in the "remarkable band" worn by warriors "over the mouth, from which issue metal objects in the form of tusks."³

We have seen how, in Malekula, tusks are attached to the remodelled skulls of the dead. Masks and images also invariably represent either ghosts or mythological figures (which are but the collective figures of ghosts), and, as we have already seen from the Vao evidence, there is no doubt about the connexion existing between tusked boars and the Guardian Ghost. It is therefore not surprising that Speiser should note the same phenomenon in Nias, by calling attention to the "countless representations," in Indonesia, "of daemons, nearly all of which are distinguished by the large tusks issuing from their jaws." As he points out, "by binding on the tusks the Nias warrior clearly makes himself into a daemon," and goes on to suggest that "the rearing of boars with artificially elongated tusks may be due to a desire to represent daemonic attributes." He adds: "tusked boars themselves may once have been regarded as daemonic."⁴ The truth of this last supposition we have seen amply borne out in the evidence from Vao.

¹ Examples may be seen in the British Museum and in the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and of Ethnology. See also Layard, 2, Plate XVII, No. 3; also numerous examples illustrated in Speiser, 3, Plate 92 onwards, and Deacon, 4, Figs. 23, 24, 26, and Plates XIV, XV, XVI.

² Speiser, 3, Plate 81, No. 11.

³ Speiser, 6, pp. 159-60.

⁴ Speiser, 6, p. 160.

CHAPTER XI

THE MAKI: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

796 SOME indication has already been gained from the preceding chapters regarding the nature of the Maki as a propitiatory rite in which, through the sacrifice of tusked boars, the sacrificer identifies himself with the Guardian Ghost and thereby ensures himself against annihilation after death. In so doing he at the same time honours the ancestral ghosts, and gains for himself a place by their side in the hereafter by gradually rising in rank through each successive sacrifice, each sacrifice representing a re-birth signified by the lighting of a new fire and the assumption of a new title and name. Each act of re-birth is followed by a period of seclusion in which on the physical plane he is treated as a little child unable to feed itself and being fed by others (on Vao by his wife), and on the spiritual plane he consolidates his gains, makes vows of abstinence, and plans the acquisition of yet higher ranks as soon as his material losses caused by the sacrifice of pigs and the immense outlay in food-stuffs for those assisting in and witnessing the rites have been made good.

796 In this way the Maki resembles other graded institutions of a public nature (for there is no secrecy about these rites) throughout Malekula, Ambim and Epi, all known by variants of the same word, the best known so far being the *Mangki* of South-West and West Malekula recorded by Deacon.¹ Other institutions of a similar nature are the *Sukwe* of the Banks Islands and the Northern New Hebrides described by Codrington and Rivers, the *Sumbe* of Malo, and a number of like institutions known by a variety of names in other islands of the group, of which a brief survey will be found in Chapters XXVI to XXVIII.

While all these institutions follow the same main lines, there is, however, immense variation in detail not only in different districts, but even in neighbouring villages in the same district. In this way, while the Maki of the Small Islands and its variants in Malekula, Ambim and Epi are all characterised by the erection of stone monuments of various kinds, such as monoliths, dolmens and stone-platforms, set up in special dancing-grounds, such monuments are entirely absent from the Banks Islands *Sukwe* in which the chief cult object of veneration is a cycas palm erected outside the men's house corresponding to the Vao *ghamal*.

¹ Deacon, 4, Chapters X, XI, XII. For Deacon's reference to this rite as *Nimangki* see footnote 2, p. 12.

CHAPTER XII

THE MAKI: GONGS, SONGS, DANCES

SLIT GONGS

Two kinds: horizontal and upright.

INTIMATELY connected with the whole Maki rite are the upright slit gongs.

There are two types of slit gong in the New Hebrides:

(a) A length of bamboo or wood hollowed out by means of a longitudinal slit, which is laid horizontally on the ground and sounded by being beaten with a stick on one edge of the slit. This type is found widely distributed in Polynesia and Southern Melanesia, and in the matrilineal region of the Solomons.¹ So far as the New Hebrides are concerned, this is the only type of slit gong found throughout the group except in the cultural area centering round Malekula, where the upright slit gong predominates. Even in these islands, however, small horizontal slit gongs are combined in orchestras with the upright gongs. These horizontal slit gongs are usually plain, though in South Malekula they may occasionally be found carved with a face at one end, apparently in imitation of the upright gongs.

(b) Upright slit gongs made out of the trunks of forest trees, in which a vertical slit is made, through which the trunk is hollowed out by means of shell adzes, leaving a thickness of two or three inches of wood all round. The cylinder so formed is left closed at both ends, the lower end being buried in the ground and the upper end carved to represent a human face. The gong is thus at the same time a statue, and the sound produced by striking one edge of the slit is said in some districts (though I was not told this on Vao) to represent the voice of the ancestral ghosts. These magnificent instruments, sometimes as much as ten feet high, have, compared with the horizontal slit gongs, a very restricted area of distribution. They are found only in Malekula, Ambrym, Epi and Fate. Thus, if we except Fate (about which we have no information as to the presence or absence of a graded society), their distribution is seen to coincide exactly with that of the Maki and of the monolith as the most characteristic monument erected for the higher ranks.²

¹ Rivers, I, vol. II, pp. 459-60. Rivers points out that they are absent from the Western Solomons, where the influence of the betel people have ousted many features of the culture of the kava people to whom he attributes the introduction of these instruments.

² See Chapter XXVI, pp. 697, 712, 717.

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Connexion between na-leng and artificial elongation of the head.

535 One further matter of comparative interest is worth mentioning
536 also, namely that the type of beauty chiefly associated with those dances
304 in Seniang is intimately connected with the practice of artificially elongating the head. This type of head-deformation, or head-beautifying as the natives see it, is restricted to the south and south-west of Malekula, and in Seniang only such youths as have finely elongated heads are allowed to take part.

Na-leng performances very flexible, both in form and in manner in which they are used.

535 I began this section on the *na-leng* by pointing out that the dances and
536 plays called by this name represent what is perhaps the most conscious element in the whole complex of Malekulan culture. As such, they are also the most flexible, and in the case of burlesques of the secular variety new ones are constantly being invented. Indeed, it is of the essence of the secular plays that they *should* be new, or if, as often happens, a successful play is repeated, that new features should be added. The dances, being much more highly organised and involving a greater number of participants, have not yet emancipated themselves from the traditional initiation pattern to the same extent, but even they possess a much greater elasticity of form than the processional or circular dances, which change much more slowly. For the same reason, they are more movable also in a topographical sense, parties of performers vying with one another in showing off their new conceits, and so seizing every opportunity that offers to perform in other villages. Thus, while the organisation of the *na-leng* is still on a kinship basis, the ritual occasions on which they are performed are apt to be taken in a particularly light-hearted way. On the other hand, when the community is depressed they are often the first ritual element to be dropped out, the excuse of being "too-lazy" to perform being one which is admitted in the case of a *na-leng*, but unthinkable in the case of the more fundamental aspects of the rite.

Dances of na-leng type from New Ireland.

535 It is therefore interesting to note that, in the only other part of the
536 Western Pacific from which dances of *na-leng* type have been recorded, namely the Tanga group of islands off the east coast of New Ireland, these dances form part of a secret society initiation rite that has recently been introduced from the neighbouring mainland.¹ It is also perhaps not without significance that New Ireland, whence this society came, is not far from Arawi (Arue) on the coast of New Britain, which is the nearest point to Malekula where artificial elongation of the head is practised,

¹ Bell, pp 311 ff.

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and whence also Speiser derives the New Hebridean practice of artificially elongating the tusks of boars.¹

Sociologically it is interesting to note that in Tanga, while residence is patrilineal, descent and inheritance are matrilineal, which supports the conclusion already arrived at, that dances of *na-leng* type belong to a matrilineal culture ante-dating, in Malekula, the introduction of patrilineal descent and residence and the existing form of Maki.

Canoe na-leng from Matanavat resembles similar dance recorded by Captain Cook from Tonga in 1776.

In concluding this section, I cannot refrain from comparing a brief account of a *na-leng* recently danced in Matanavat with one seen by Captain Cook in Tonga in the year 1776. Of Matanavat Harrisson writes:

"A beautiful dance symbolises the coming of a first canoe, the chorus moving forward with feathered and painted paddles to the nut-rattled rhythm from the bangles tied on their ankles, all the upper body moving in muscle as their feet strike forward like waves over the earth, while at the back the two steersmen work their big paddles as if in a storm."

Captain Cook's account from Tonga runs:

"The chief entertained us, in his turn, with an exhibition, which, as was acknowledged by us all, was performed with a dexterity and exactness far surpassing the specimen we had given of our military manœuvres. It was a kind of dance, so entirely different from anything I had ever seen, that I fear I can give no description that will convey any tolerable idea of it to my readers. It was performed by men; and one hundred and five persons bore their parts in it. Each of them had in his hand an instrument neatly made, shaped somewhat like a paddle, of two feet and a half in length, with a small handle and a thin blade, so that they were very light. With these instruments they made many and various flourishes, each of which was accompanied with a different movement. At first the performers ranged themselves in three lines, and, by various evolutions, each man changed his station in such a manner that those who had been in the rear came into the front. Nor did they remain long in the same position. At one time they extended themselves in one line, they then formed into a semicircle, and lastly into two square columns. While this last movement was executing, one of them advanced and performed an antic-dance before me, with which the whole ended.

"The musical instruments consisted of two drums, or rather two

¹ See p. 267.

² Harrisson, 2, p. 35. In this *na-leng* the dancers have apparently combined the mythological motive of crossing the water, seen in the Atchin dance, with a historical drama.

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535 hollow logs of wood, from which some varied notes were produced by
536 beating on them with two sticks. It did not, however, appear to me that
171 the dancers were much assisted by these sounds, but by a chorus of vocal
music, in which all the performers joined at the same time. Their song
was not destitute of pleasing melody, and all their corresponding motions
were executed with so much skill, that the numerous body of dancers
seemed to act as if they were one great machine. It was the opinion of
every one of us that such a performance would have met with universal
applause on an European theatre, and it so far exceeded any attempt we
had made to entertain them, that they seemed to pique themselves on the
superiority they had over us."¹

Tongan and Malekulan settings compared.

This account is interesting for its close similarity with the Malekulan performances. The hundred and five performers undoubtedly represent a chorus of one hundred, which, it will be remembered, is the ideal number in the Small Islands, with five other dancers taking individual rôles. The chorus forms into squares, and the same instrument accompanies the dance as that used in the Small Islands *na-leng*, namely the small horizontal slit gong. The manner in which the Tongan dance was performed, as a theatrical performance pure and simple, also agrees with the flexible nature of the *na-leng* on Malekula.

Polynesian elements in the New Hebrides probably due to passage of Polynesians on their migration eastward.

The comparison just drawn raises anew the question of the nature of Polynesian influence in the New Hebrides. It is sometimes thought that such traces as are found are due to chance voyages back westward from Polynesia in comparatively recent times. Such movements have undoubtedly taken place, though whether by design or owing to contrary winds is not known. Both may have contributed. But the fundamental connexion of the *na-leng*, not with the newer, but with the older forms of public graded society ritual in Malekula, point rather to the fact that some elements of Polynesian culture at least reached Polynesia by way of the New Hebrides.

If this is the case, it reinforces the impression gained from the evidence of the extensive stone constructions in such places as Gaua² and Malo that there existed in these islands at one time a culture considerably more highly developed than any of those found there now, and that this had much in common with certain aspects of Polynesian culture as it existed when the white men first found it.

¹ Cook, pp. 265-6.

² See Codrington, 3, Frontispiece, and Harrison, 2, Plate facing p. 322, which figures the only stone statue carved in the round that has been recorded in the islands.

CHAPTER XVIII

INITIATION : GENERAL

INTRODUCTION

Two kinds of initiation on Vao : (a) Initiation into Manhood, performed at home ; (b) Initiation into Sex, performed on Oba.

THE cultural history of Initiation in the Small Islands is an extremely complicated one. There are at present in these islands two main kinds of initiation, both of which it is necessary for all boys to undergo. These are:

(1) Initiation into Manhood, performed at home. The outstanding elements of this are: (i) the operation of incision, in which the foreskin is slit but left hanging behind the glans, and (ii) a series of elaborate hoaxes.

(2) Initiation into Sex, for which it is necessary to journey overseas to some distant island in the matrilineal dual organisation area, chiefly to Oba, regarded by the Small Islanders as the land of the creator-deity Ta-ghar, whither the novices accompany their elders when these go in their sea-going canoes to trade in pigs. Similar, though lesser, rites are gone through when a boy voyages for the first time to Malo, Raga or even Ambrim, in which latter place the dual organisation persists in the form of the two matrilineal moieties forming the basis of the 6-class kinship system. This form of initiation is thus primarily connected with the matrilineal dual organisation, the creator-deity Ta-ghar, and sea-going canoes.

This curious situation, involving two independent initiation rites, of which Initiation into Manhood consists also of two originally independent elements, and Initiation into Sex has to be accomplished on foreign soil, cannot be explained by an examination of the Vao rites alone, and becomes to some extent intelligible only when we survey the corresponding rites practised by neighbouring people.

Analysis of initiation rites in the Northern New Hebrides into three main types.

From this survey of the initiation rites recorded by myself and others in neighbouring districts it would appear that there are in the surrounding islands three main types of rite that have become combined in the initiation ritual of the Small Islands.

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These are:

(a) A simple initiation rite accompanied by ordeals lasting ten days such as is performed in East Santo, including Initiation into Sex.¹ From the available evidence this would appear to have been the earliest, as it is indeed the simplest, form of the rite.

(b) The operation of incision, or in some cases of a peculiar type of circumcision, to be referred to below, both of which automatically preclude any immediate sexual experience,² though in certain districts this is counter-balanced by homosexual practices, either real in which the novice becomes the boy-lover of his already initiated tutor, or mythical when it is said that the active part in this relationship is taken by ghosts. The practice of incision is found in the North Central and Southern New Hebrides and in New Caledonia, in all which places it is found in association with the wearing of a special type of penis-wrapper to which special reference will be made below. Incision is also a widespread practice in many parts of Polynesia. Codrington considers that it was introduced from Polynesia into the Southern New Hebrides and thence travelled northwards.³ Speiser, on the other hand, believes that it was introduced direct from Arue on the south coast of New Britain.⁴ It is not my intention to discuss these wider issues, but to confine my brief survey to the North Central New Hebrides, where it occurs in the overtly patrilineal islands of Malekula, the Small Islands, Ambrim and South Raga. So far as this area is concerned, its movement is certainly in a northward direction, as shown by its spread northward from Ambrim to Raga and thence very recently to Maewo.⁵ Deacon also records its introduction into West Malekula from Pangkumu⁶ on the east coast. In these islands it has almost precisely the same distribution as the forms of public graded society known by variants of the word Maki, and is said in Vao to have been founded by To-wewe after he had introduced the Maki, and not to have been practised in the preceding phases of culture when the graded society was not of the Maki type but belonged to that intermediate between it and the *Sukus*.⁷ The ritual accompanying the operation is found in its simplest form in South-West Malekula⁸ and the Sulol district of Ambrim,⁹ where it is carried out in the ordinary men's

¹ Speiser, 3, pp. 287-8.

² Speiser (3, p. 289) cites a form of initiation on Ambrim lasting one hundred days, in which from the tenth day after the operation the boys have sexual intercourse with a widow. As, however, the boys are said to be only between 7 and 10 years old the statement needs verification, and it may well be that there are two types of initiation as on Vao.

³ Codrington, 3, p. 234.

⁴ Speiser, 6, pp. 128-40, 154-6, 165-8. Here incision (or circum-incision, see p. 476) appears to have been of comparatively late introduction and to have caused a doubling of the initiation rite.

⁵ Codrington, 3, p. 234.

⁶ Deacon, 4, p. 245.

⁷ Deacon, 4, p. 244.

⁸ Rivers, 3.

⁹ See pp. 497, 499.

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Lodge and lasts only ten days. The operation itself would therefore appear to have been imposed on the earlier short form of initiation listed under (a), which it resembles also in the comparative simplicity of the ordeals that the novices are made to undergo, compared with their far greater elaboration in North Malekula. 881 171

(c) A series of hoaxes in which the initiates performing them represent ghosts and often imitate birds, and produce special noises which the novices are then made to learn. Closely associated with these hoaxes, and in contrast to the other two types of initiation, a special Lodge is built of very tall dimensions, higher than any other building, in or around which the hoaxes take place. Further, in contrast to the short ten-day period observed in the two other forms of the rite, the period of seclusion in these tall specially constructed Lodges lasts for thirty days and includes certain sub-periods lasting seven days. Many of these elements of initiation are, as will be shown below, related to the performances of the *Kwat* society recorded by Codrington from the island of Oba, Maewo and North Raga.¹

These three main types are combined in the Small Islands' Initiation into Manhood, excepting Initiation into Sex which has been re-introduced. 881

In the Small Islands all three types of initiation have been combined into the imposing rite of Initiation into Manhood, with the exception of the heterosexual element in the earliest form of the rite, rendered impossible by the operation of incision.

This missing element has been re-introduced in the quite separate rite of Initiation into Sex, which, as we have seen, is not, properly speaking, a Malekulan rite, but one for which the Small Islanders have to journey overseas to Oba or some other island in the matrilineal dual organisation area to the north or east. This re-introduction is, moreover, closely connected with the introduction of the mat-skirt for women into the coastal districts of Malekula, since in the stories concerning the origin of this rite, to be related in a later volume, the introducer was a man who, turning himself into a shark, swam under water to Oba and thence stole one of the mat-skirts that the Oba women were washing and had laid out on the beach to dry, and brought it back for his wife. It is doubtless owing to this re-introduction that this rite, though invested with all the glamour attending a boy's first overseas expedition and of a mysterious quest in unknown lands, is in fact sociologically of comparatively little importance when compared with the more basic Initiation into Manhood. Thus, in the first place, Initiation into Manhood always precedes Initiation into Sex, no youth being allowed to undertake the journey to distant lands in search of sexual knowledge until he has already been

¹ See p. 492. The above three types of initiation appear respectively to correspond roughly with the three culture complexes referred to by Deacon (4, pp. 705-6) as the Dual Organisation, Fringe-skirt and Mat-skirt cultures.

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isation it could be adopted as an everyday practice in the manner described by Deacon, and has led also to the adoption of the very large penis-wrappers worn by these men.

Active homosexuality in circum-incision areas replaced in the Small Islands by threats of homosexual action on the part of ghosts.

So much for the Big Nambas. From Raga, the only other area from which organised homosexuality has been reported, we have no details by which to test the validity or otherwise of what has just been suggested.

When we turn to those tribes in this area which practise only the simpler operation of incision, we find that, though homosexuality exists among them, it is unorganised and not carried to anything like the same extent as among the Big Nambas.¹ Thus in the Small Islands though novices address their tutors (or guardians), as among the Big Nambas, as "husband" and in some cases the tutor reciprocates by calling his novice his "wife," they do not necessarily have homosexual relations and the terminology does not extend into secular life, but, on the contrary, the novices throughout the rites are constantly threatened with homosexual action on the part of ghosts.

Relation between incision and circum-incision.

Such threats without action suggest the possibility that the whole motive of ghostly homosexuality has been derived from the circum-incision area, and in this case Rivers may be right in regarding incision as being a degraded form of circum-incision, though not on the grounds he states. On the other hand, the Small Islands attitude towards ritual homosexuality as a spiritual phenomenon connected almost exclusively with ghosts and with initiation may indicate a more archetypal view. In this case circum-incision as an exaggerated form of incision would fall into line with other exaggerated forms of culture indulged in by the Big Nambas such as their extreme cannibalism and the incessant wars they wage among themselves.

I do not propose to attempt to solve this problem, but will content myself with pointing out the fact that, while the operation of incision is spread over almost the whole of the Southern and Central New Hebrides, circum-incision as practised among the Big Nambas and in South Raga occurs only in the extreme north of this area. Here also the moot point is raised as to whether it is the starting-point from which the degraded practice of incision spread south or whether, since according to Codrington incision came from the south, it is an ultimate development and is itself an exaggerated form of incision. In this respect it must be remembered that Codrington's evidence rests on the very slender foundation of a purely local movement from Ambirim to Raga and very recently northwards to Maewo. But since any coastal movement spreading from Malekula to

¹ See p. 487.

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Ambrim in the way that the Maki has spread might then automatically move northwards along the eastern chain of islands, this is in fact no evidence at all regarding the larger movements of culture.

Homosexuality in Egypt and Fiji.

Two facts of comparative ethnology should be mentioned before leaving this subject. We have seen how in the district of Lambumbu the homosexual relationship takes on a fearful form when connected with ghosts. The same is true also of the Small Islands, where it is always connected with threats. It is therefore of interest that in ancient Egypt ritual homosexuality appears to have been connected with punishment or revenge. This is summed up in an article by Mr. G. D. Hornblower¹ in which he says, "the notion of unnatural vice seems to have been connected in the ancient Egyptian mind with enemies," and cites the case of Set threatening to treat his dire enemy Horus as a woman, adding: "It may be that the word *hmti*, meaning 'woman-like,' which is an insulting term applied to enemies, refers, at least inferentially, to the indignity in question." He then mentions how, at an annual festival held in Cairo on the birthday of a Sheikh, "a public representation was given on a cart of the act of paederasty," which appears to have been regarded as a religious act and was suppressed some forty years ago.

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Replying to this article the late Professor A. M. Hocart wrote a letter to *Man* which, however, was never published, but from which Mr. Hornblower kindly allows me to quote. He says: "His [Mr. Hornblower's] facts tempt me to bring forward a suggestion which I have for years had in mind, but been unable to confirm so far. It is that sodomy was once recognised between cross-cousins." He adds: "This rests on the flimsiest of foundations," but I include it here because his evidence is taken from the hill tribes of Fiji who, as stated by Dr. Haddon, in certain physical respects resemble the Big Nambas,² and some of whom also practise circumcision.³ The facts cited by Hocart are as follows:

- "(1) In the hill tribes of Fiji male cross-cousins address one another as *veidhakavi*, which means 'to do to one another,' a euphemism for copulation. It may, however, be that the term has been improperly transferred from cross-cousins of opposite sexes.
- "(2) There is in various parts of the Pacific a very close bond of friendship which I take to be a survival of cross-cousinship among people who have lost the relationship. In Hawaii it is called *let-kane*, 'eating man,' a term which is also a euphemism for sodomy.
- "(3) Cross-cousins continually fight and cheat one another in sport. This sporting, and sometimes rough, feud has in many cases degenerated into earnest."

¹ G. D. Hornblower, *Man*, August 1927, No. 97.

² A. C. Haddon, 1, p. xxii.

³ Rivers, 1, vol. II, p. 436, quoting Fison.

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Hocart further points out that the custom of cross-cousin marriage was at one time much more widespread than it is today, suggesting that it may formerly have occurred also in Egypt. However this may be, it is interesting to note that in a 4-section system the male cross-cousin is the brother of the prescribed bride, so that, if we may take the evidence that in the hill tribes of Fiji men marry their mothers' brothers' daughters as indicating the former existence of a 4-section system in that island, this evidence falls into line with the fact pointed out above that in Western Australia and possibly also among the Big Nambas a man took as his boy-lover a member of his wife's marriage section, and that it was only later that this love-relationship turned into one of joking and mutual violence.

(4) THE KWAT ELEMENT

The last subject to be dealt with in this survey of Initiation in North Malekula and the Small Islands is the third element listed on p. 475 under (c), of which the chief features are the hoaxes and the thirty-day period of seclusion. Closely bound up with this is a special term applied in this region to the guardians or tutors¹ who among the Big Nambas are also the novices' chief partners in the homosexual relationship. This term, applied irrespective of whether the operation itself is that of incision or circum-incision, has approximately the same geographical distribution as the term *bagho* and its dialectical variants, all probably meaning "shark," used to designate the newer form of the rite. The corresponding term for novice has the same distribution. Recorded examples are:

	GUARDIAN OR TUTOR	NOVICE
Vao	<i>to-mbat</i>	<i>mov ghal</i>
Atchin	<i>to-bat</i>	<i>moh wal</i>
Matanavat	<i>tu-mbat</i> ²	—
Big Nambas	<i>du-but</i> ³	<i>mugh vel</i>
Laravat	<i>n-to'mbat</i> ⁴	<i>murh vel</i>
Lambumbu (<i>no-wai na-mbög</i> form of the rite)	<i>tö-mbat</i> ⁵	<i>nö-vali</i>

To-mbat etc. equivalent to *Kwat*, *A-mbat*, etc.

I am unable to translate the term used for the novice. What is of interest is that used for the guardian or tutor, which is a combination of the personal prefix *to*,⁶ *tö* or *du*, with the word *bat*, *mbat* or *but*. This word

¹ Deacon uses both terms "guardian" and "tutor." In my own account of initiation I use "tutor."

² Harrison, 2, p. 46.

³ Deacon, 4, p. 260. The same terminology is used in the rites of the *Ni-manghi* Tlai society which Deacon likens to the Banks Islands *Tamata* societies, with which are associated the *Kwat* societies mentioned below (Deacon, 4, pp. 236 ff.).

⁴ Ibid. p. 236.

⁵ Ibid. p. 230.

⁶ See p. 208, note 1.

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In the early stages of this conflict the rule of *lex talionis* seems to have been carried out fairly successfully, and the numbers of dead on either side accord well with those killed in the traditional fighting of the "classical" period. Moreover, the only weapon mentioned in this fighting is the spear with which one of the Tolamp women was killed. It would therefore appear that this part of the fighting was fought without muskets. The ten Atchin men killed in the final battle were, however, out of all proportion to the number of those usually killed in the old days, and the unwonted slaughter was probably due to the possession of muskets by the Vao men before these weapons had reached Atchin. 721 173

It is, however, clear from my informant's comment on this account that the Atchin men soon found means of revenging themselves, for he states that in the fighting that followed the inhabitants of the mainland village of Tolamp were almost wiped out. As we have seen, the survivors later migrated to Vao, where they were given land to live on by their Togh-vanu kinsmen, in return for which the Togh-vanu people were given a large share of garden ground on the mainland formerly belonging to Tolamp.

CANNIBALISM AND HUMAN SACRIFICE

Cannibalism general, with few exceptions, throughout the whole group.

When the white man first came to the New Hebrides, cannibalism was practised almost all over the group, though there were certain exceptions. Thus, Codrington reports that there was no evidence for it in Maewo,¹ and that it was quite definitely not practised in the Banks and Torres Islands, though tales of Vampyres in those islands seem to indicate that it was once the custom there too.² A somewhat similar condition of affairs is reported by Tattevin from the district of Pornowol in South Raga, where cannibalism is not practised but man-killers assume the title *ias* in memory of certain mythical beings of this name who ate men.³ Another curious pocket of natives who are not cannibals though all the surrounding natives are is reported by Harrison from Matanavat on the north coast of Malekula.⁴ These are, however, exceptions, and as a general rule cannibalism existed throughout the group. 266 171

It was, however, the first thing to be suppressed by what Government there was, with the result that the custom is confined now to East, Central and South-West Santo, the interior of Malekula, East Ambrim and South Raga.⁵ 266 648

¹ Codrington, 3, p. 344.

² Tattevin, 1, 1926, p. 409.

³ Harrison, 2, p. 40.

⁴ Speiser, 3, pp. 239, 449.

⁵ Tattevin, however, says that the Pornowol in South Raga are no longer cannibals.

¹ Ibid., 3, pp. 221-2.

See also p. 17 in this volume.

Tattevin, however, says that the Pornowol in South

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the dead is situated vaguely in the wooded open ground behind this rock and is surrounded by a high fence. Always sitting by the rock is a female [guardian] ghost, [called] Temes Savsap,¹ and on the ground in front of her is drawn the completed geometrical figure known as *Nahal*,² 'The Path.' The path which the ghost must traverse lies between the two halves of the figure.

"As each ghost comes along the road the guardian ghost hurriedly rubs out one half of the figure. The ghost now comes up, but loses his track and cannot find it. He wanders about searching for a way to get past the Temes [Guardian Ghost] of the rock, but in vain. Only a knowledge of the completed geometrical figure can release him from this impasse. If he knows this figure, he at once completes the half which Temes Savsap rubbed out; and passes down the track through the middle of the figure. If, however, he does not know the figure, the Temes, seeing he will never find the road, eats him, and he never reaches the abode of the dead."

Sand-tracings represent labyrinths.

It is not within the province of this book to discuss this statement in detail. Subsequent research, based partly on an analysis of the designs themselves and partly on a comparative study of mythology and mortuary rites over a wide field, has shown, however, that the design called "The Path" is in fact a degraded form of labyrinth such as, in ancient Egypt and elsewhere, stood before the tomb representing the entrance to the future life. It is for this reason that it is described how the ghost "loses his track and cannot find it," how he "wanders about," and how "only a knowledge of the completed geometrical figure can release him from this impasse." The whole subject of these designs, together with that of the *na-leng* maze-dances described on pp. 336-9 with which they are closely associated, has been fully discussed in my paper on *Maze-Dances and the Ritual of the Labyrinth in Malekula* published in *Folk-Lore*, vol. XLVII, June 1936, to which the reader should refer for a more detailed analysis.

Labyrinth mythology connected with older layer in the beliefs regarding the Journey of the Dead, corresponding to those held in ancient Egypt.

It is, however, necessary to a proper understanding of the mythology underlying the Small Island designs to make two points clear. In the first place, it will be remembered that the beliefs concerning the Journey of the Dead in the Small Islands are divided into two cultural layers, in

¹ *Temes* means "ghost" (Vao *ta-mat*, Atchin *ta-mats*). *Savsap* is the same word as is used for the Guardian Ghost in the Small Islands, namely *Le-saw-saw* in Atchin, *Le-hév-hev* in Vao (see p. 219).

² A widespread word used with the same meaning in many parts of Malekula: Vao *na-hal*, Atchin *ni-sal*.

³ Deacon, 3, p. 130.

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the earlier of which the dead are believed to have their home in a cave, while in the second the cave has been reduced to the status of a mere episode in a much longer story according to which the dead man walks right through it and, after undergoing various tests, finds his final home in the volcano on Ambirim.¹ These two layers of belief are far from being confined to the Small Islands and have close parallels in many parts of the world. Professor Hooke has indeed gone so far as to trace both layers of belief back to the two great religions of the Ancient East, showing the close connexion of the earlier Malekulan story, in which the home of the dead was located in or immediately behind a cave, with the beliefs current in ancient Egypt, and the later and longer story including the journey to the volcano with the Sumerian system as found in the Gilgamesh Epic.²

Of the two systems it is clear that the account given above of the dead man's journey in South-West Malekula belongs to the first, which shows close parallels with the beliefs current in Egypt. It is therefore not without significance that the labyrinth, well known in Egypt, should in Malekula be also associated with this early layer of megalithic culture.

Labyrinth a re-birth symbol.

What precise route this particular cultural trait followed is not known. It has, however, a wide distribution, as shown in a further study on *Labyrinth Ritual in South India* (Folk-Lore, vol. XLVIII, June 1937), from which, as well as from other evidence from many parts of the world, it is seen that among the many similarities in labyrinth ritual and belief certain facts stand out as being of special import, namely:

- (i) that it always has to do with death and re-birth relating either to a life after death or to the mysteries of initiation;
- (ii) that it is almost always connected with a cave (or more rarely a constructed dwelling);
- (iii) that in those cases where the ritual has been preserved the labyrinth itself, or a drawing of it, is invariably situated at the entrance to the cave or dwelling;
- (iv) that the presiding personage, either mythical or actual, is always a woman;
- (v) that the labyrinth itself is walked through, or the labyrinth design walked over, by men.

Instances of labyrinth ritual from various parts of the world.

To take only a few instances: In the Malekulan account given above, the design is drawn and watched over by a female Guardian Ghost sitting beside a cave, and has to be completed and walked "through" before the

¹ See p. 231.

² See Hooke.

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dead man can pass through the cave into the land of the dead, where he will be re-born into a new life after death. This doubtless explains Godefroy's statement that in Vao, as in Santo, the designs were formerly drawn by women. Among the Tamils of South India designs in some cases almost identical with those from Malekula are drawn by living Hindu women before the thresholds of their houses in the month when the sun dies and is re-born, and the designs are straightway walked over by their husbands.¹ A more classical instance is Vergil's account at the beginning of the *Sixth Aeneid* of how Aeneas, seeking to visit his father Anchises in Hades, first has to visit the female sibyl who guards the entrance, near which is a painted representation of the Cretan labyrinth, and of the well-known events connected with it.² Nearer home still are the Celtic stone crosses, symbols of re-birth, with their entangling designs. Rather later in time are the labyrinth designs executed on the floor of the nave or over the west door of many mediaeval Gothic churches, and the turf mazes which the village boys run round in our own country,³ while today in parts of Scotland and north England women draw what in the north are called "tangled thried" designs on their thresholds and hearthstones as a prophylactic against evil influences or witches.⁴

Psychological significance: "Dream-walking" on Vao.

From this brief summary it will be seen that the labyrinth has a long cultural history. But it would not persist in so many places if it had not also a deep psychological significance. Many people have labyrinthine dreams in which they try to prove the mysteries of life. Somnambulistic phenomena also are often of this nature. Nor are such things confined to our own culture.

Godefroy describes a culturally recognised condition of dream-walking on Vao called *rel pul*, words which mean literally walking (*rel*) in a dream (*pul*).⁵ He describes it as "walking in a dream, or rather a dream-state induced while a man walks about, which lasts all day long. I have a strong suspicion that the *rel pul* is a ritual act, since the dreamer must be in a state of fast beginning the evening before; he does not speak, he goes alone, with a switch in his hand, sits down from time to time, and if a friend joins him, such words as pass between them must be spoken in a very low voice. A man who is doing *rel pul* is never criticised nor regarded as being lazy (*nime mat-mat*, 'having the hands dead,' i.e. paralysed), as are those who stay behind on Vao doing nothing instead of going with all the rest to work in the mainland gardens."⁶

¹ Layard, 7, p. 124.² See Knight. Till the publication of the Malekulan evidence this passage had remained a puzzle to scholars. Mr. Knight was the first to explain it.³ See Matthews.⁴ See Banks, p. 78.⁵ Compare Atchin *por-por*, Mota *gora(-gora)*, both meaning "to dream."⁶ Godefroy, 1, 1934, p. 210.

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Malekulan labyrinth belongs to early unstereotyped kind.

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Such dream-walking represents an introverted state sanctioned by culture in which, so far as we know, the dream-walker follows no stereotyped route. It is therefore of interest when compared with the question of labyrinth designs, since in the early history of the labyrinth this also had no stereotyped form, being simply a complicated way intended to confuse or baffle those who were not familiar with its plan. Stereotyped forms of labyrinth such as that of the well-known labyrinth design of the coins of Knossos did not occur till the labyrinth had lost its meaning as a form of initiation through which the candidate wishing to solve the mysteries of death and re-birth had to pass.

Now used as games of skill and named according to the designer's fancy.

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An examination of the Malekulan labyrinth designs shows that these belong to such an early unstereotyped stage, since, of all those collected in Malekula and the neighbouring islands both by myself and Deacon, and in Raga by Miss Harcastle and Dr. Firth,¹ no two are alike. Indeed, now that they are used as games of skill this tendency, as with cats' cradles, with which they are probably allied, now serves to stimulate the creative ingenuity of the natives, who, while certain designs, of course, become traditional and are copied over and over again, constantly invent new ones as an intellectual pastime. Each new design is given a name, as a rule to suit the designer's fancy, though in the case of one particular type, as will be shown, the names almost always have to do with ghosts.

TWO MAIN TYPES OF DESIGN

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While, as we have seen, the individual designer is at liberty to exercise his fancy to a certain extent, he is, however, in other respects strictly confined within the limits described at the beginning of this chapter, namely the tracing of a continuous-line design meandering in and about a framework consisting of:

- A, straight lines, often set at right angles and crossing one another, which I will refer to as a linear framework; or
- B, small circles set in a regular pattern.

While in actual practice these two types sometimes overlap, the two categories are nevertheless important, since each originally represented a different aspect of the labyrinth myth. The evidence dealing with the origin of these two types is set out fully and with reproductions of the most relevant designs in the article already referred to,² and can here only be summarised in a manner that might appear arbitrary were it not possible for the student to follow it out in detail in the article mentioned.

¹ Published in Deacon, 5.

² Layard, 6.

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THE New Hebrides and Banks Islands natives have not been described as a unit, and our knowledge of south-central islands culture is still practically nil. The north and south parts of the group have matrilineal descent, but in the centre descent is patrilineal, this being almost certainly the later evolved form. The patrilineal people have two regular characteristics: slit gongs placed upright and a skull cult. The penis wrapper and incision are patrilineal and southern matrilineal, but do not occur in the northern matrilineal section, where the men wear hanging mats or go naked. Female clothing has a typically complex distribution; in the Banks a narrow *tapa* strip, in Santo a tiny leaf strip, in the north-eastern and central islands a red mat, in north Malekula a fringed mat, central Malekula fibrous skirt, south Malekula a plain mat, the southernmost isles a large fibre skirt, very elaborate on Erromango (Humphreys, 1927).

Secret societies have a wide distribution, but the secular graded society (*Sukwe* or *Maki*), the principle feature of life in north and centre, is absent in the south. Stone work is used in connection with this society except in north-east Santo. Hereditary chieftainship dominates the southern isles, but in the north only occurs among the Big Nambas. Remarkable are the long-headed deformation people of south Malekula, with a most elaborate secret-society culture. Totemism has a most erratic distribution, as has the use of *kava*. The most southerly islands have dominantly curvilinear art, but in the north angularity is regular. A benign ancestor-creator, with obvious affinities to Polynesian Tangaroa, is universal and of probably later origin *via* Omba and Malo, while Maui, the earlier Polynesian deity, is confined to the southern islands (*cf.* Williamson, 1924). The importance of the colour red and a rank society for women have a correlated distribution in the north-east and north-centre; splendid pantomimic dances, *na-leng*, the highest manifestation of native art, have a similar distribution, but occur again in simpler form in the southern isles. These too are later influences, as also a form of sacrifice on a stone table. The exact nature and effect of the many haphazard and subsidiary distributions of ideas that have occurred in these islands are being studied by Layard and myself.

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The local variation and complexity of this culture is astonishing. There is apparently no single item which is found uniformly throughout the group. Some things have a wide distribution, such as the word-root *mal* connected with the hawk, megapode, and rituals in which these are concerned; a many-barbed spear of casuarina wood; the term for child *natuk*; the ritual importance of tusker pigs; pandean pipes, though these vary greatly in form and usage. Of special interest as culturally peculiar are the Sakaus, with the simplest culture in the area; the communal house hill people of Santo; the Big Nambas and fibre-skirt tribes of Malekula. I am unable to decide which, if any, of these is the earliest and most truly Melanesian form. Our whole attitude to this problem must be revised before knowledge can advance.

Within the tribe the shape, architecture, and type of house built is constant,

but there is a big range of inter-tribal difference; take several islands and the variety is great. Curved houses seem to be found only in south Malekula, Ureparapara of the Banks (cf. Speiser, 1913, Pl. 15), and the southern islands of the group, an extraordinary distribution. To understand the development and organization of the village only structurally, a full study of each particular unit is necessary. 105
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Speiser (1913) has said something of the distribution of stone works. Stone pudding-basins are confined to Big Bay. I was interested in stone axes, of which I made a considerable collection. Remarkable stone basins, "witching-vats," are confined to Gaua, where Mrs. Baker and I also found a stone effigy (Baker, 1935). In one small area of south-west Santo, around the village of Tavua, the stone axes are entirely distinct from all others in the group, being very slender and long in relation to their breadth. Shell axes do not occur in Santo, but are common in Malekula; in the Big Nambas there are some ritual clubs that seem to be made out of fossilized squid's cuttles, very long and heavy. 411

War-clubs are curved only in north-east Santo; long stick clubs are confined to the northern islands; paddle clubs characteristic of Malekula are absent on Santo. The Santo and Malo bows are regularly arched; in south and east Malekula the concavity is uneven, greater in the lower half. Feathered spear shafts are apparently confined to north Malekula and islets; fearful spear-tips of serried human bones only in Santo. Feather-shafted arrows I have not seen in Santo, but Speiser reports them from Big Bay, and there are two without locality in the Cambridge Ethnological Museum; in certain *na-leng* dances of north Malekula, feathered arrows are used. Combs worn in the hair show wide pattern range; a triangular form I have only seen on Gaua, and ones with handles decorated by pigs' bristles are confined to Sakau, Santo. 301

The distribution of *kava* is curious. It has a very local usage in north Malekula, where it is chewed and spat into a trough; is not used in south Malekula; in Sakau, Santo, the stalk is chewed; elsewhere in Santo the root is chewed and spat out into coconut shells (only by chiefs in part of the north-west), except around Turi, where it is absent. In the eastern islands *kava* is generally used green, crushed with a stone pounder. On Malo it is seldom used unless in magical rites. 191
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There is a fair uniformity in the type of mixed bisexual dances connected with the graded society; the musical instruments vary more. Pan-pipes are the most important in north-west Santo; though widespread, these are seldom used for dances elsewhere; they are semi-sacred in central Malekula; into Sakau and Malekula the pan-pipes have been recently introduced. On Malo and in east Santo bamboos beaten on the ground are the main dance accompaniment; the former type is close to a large flute figured by Speiser (1913, Pl. 108). The nose-flute is used in Sakau; musical bow in central-south Malekula. Slit gongs are always upright in the patrilineal central islands, reclined in the northern islands. Sticks tapped together have developed into a dance band in the Big Nambas. Bone knives are common in south Malekula, but nowhere else have I found one; wooden knives are absent in Malekula, crude in Malo and W. Santo, elaborate in the Banks Islands. 191
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Tattoo is elaborately humanistic in the Banks Islands; simpler on Pentecost, with occasional spirals and circles; intricately angular on Omba; on Santo simple geometric patterns, almost entirely non-representative. Scarification replaces tattoo in Sakau. On Malekula I have not seen tattoo.

I found that chance, individuality, error, misinterpretation, war, and wind were most important in determining the cultures I investigated; these are allowed no place anywhere in Rivers' 'History of Melanesian Society' (1914). I have also much evidence for the spread of ideas and objects ahead or independent of the people who originally brought them, often accidentally, to one point. There is little evidence to be found for logical coherent waves of the Riversian "kava people" type into this part of Melanesia. And whereas movements have generally been considered to pass from the north southwards, there is no doubt that the two most obvious diffusions which I have been able to trace spread westward from Omba, which was almost certainly effected from the east, and northward from Efate through Emae, Tongoa, Hambi to south Malekula; important culture traits in Santo have largely been derived from Malo to the south. After studying the literature and the people themselves, I have come to the conclusion that the culture of south Melanesia is even more complex than had previously been supposed. Far more data are needed to make any broad generalizations valuable. There are still whole islands about whose culture we know nothing. The forthcoming work of Layard, and to a lesser extent my own, will I think demonstrate that some of the north Malekulan and Atchin traits can be associated with ritual or belief all over the Pacific and in much remoter parts of the world. These islands seem to have received the last flickers and backwashes from every step in world evolution: that is true for the period of white influence too.

Present position in the Group

The white is in general disliked by the native: mission natives sometimes like their missionaries. What respect black has for white is founded on what the former calls the latter's "cleverness"—the things he can make, his tinned sardines and launch engines. Among many peoples now, especially on Omba, Efate, Tongoa, and Nguna, there is a dawning determination to have some say in their own affairs. Now the natives have no control of any sort; they know they are being underpaid or misused. Their lack of unity has been and is the main obstacle to reform. Land in particular will be a future problem. On some islands the French claim more land than there is above water; they vigorously curtail the expansion of the native in every direction, and notably on Aore and Malo have driven out whole villages. Among the bushmen anti-white feeling is generally strong but passive; for here there is little concern with the small world outside. And whereas the bushmen are without exception decreasing, the coastal peoples in many parts, and invariably when close to a missionary and his medicines, are increasing.

On the basis of a very detailed study (to be published elsewhere) I am convinced that a hundred and fifty years ago there were not less than one million natives in the group; there are now about forty-five thousand. "Civilization" has crept on, though perhaps more slowly than anywhere else in the world. It is the missionary and the germ that has made the coast safe for civilization.